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2025

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**Sam
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PLAYBOY





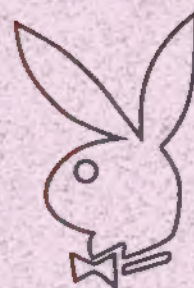
Welcome to **FLLWR**, where a comedian offers five
recs carefully selected to amuse and inspire you in
these unusual times

FLWR

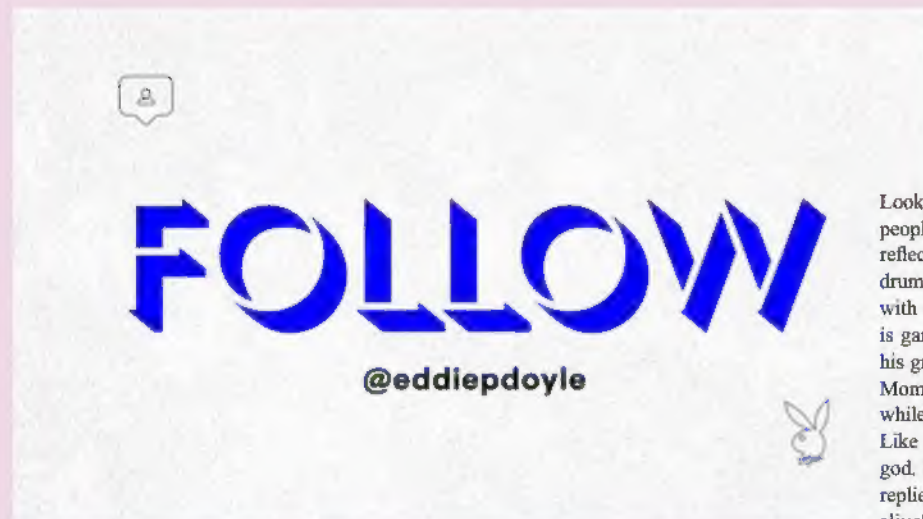
Follow, Listen, Laugh, Watch, Read: Five Recs From Comedian Beth Stelling

WRITTEN BY
BETH STELLING

INTRODUCTION
JAMES RICKMAN



With a daunting array of specials, writing credits, TV and podcast appearances, and best “stand-up” accolades, Beth Stelling is more than qualified to make you rethink Uncle Kracker (see below). Girl Daddy, a special whose name projects the odious label “female comic” onto hypothetical motherhood, premieres August 20 on HBO Max.



Look, as much as I love watching videos of people falling down stairs, cats fighting their reflections in the mirror and a goose playing a drum with his feet, I had to choose something with a little more substance. And that substance is garlic powder. I first came across Eddie and his grandma, whom he occasionally calls Mom Mom, in a video he took at the kitchen table while she seasoned her eggs with garlic powder. Like a lot of garlic powder. Eddie: “Oh my god. Mom Mom. That’s insane!” To which she replies: “You’re insane. That’s what keeps me alive!” I guess I love the sweetness in Eddie’s voice when he talks to his grandma, and the volume at which he has to deliver it in order for her to hear. Mom Mom never fails to make me laugh with her confident snark, which can only be gained from living on this planet as long as she has.

Because I tend to choose a song and listen to it on repeat for days on end, that song usually colors a particular time in my life or attaches itself to a memory. Monica Martin’s “Cruel” underscored the wintry days I spent in New York City late 2018 staying at the Standard Hotel in the West Village after I headlined Gotham Comedy Club. I got a room for myself overlooking the Hudson River that I thought would provide the perfect setting to write, but they were doing construction every day. Loud banging, drills, wrenches maybe? It felt like they were cutting my room out of the side of the building. One afternoon I started to take a bath to relax, and the tub filled with brown water. So I toweled off, turned Monica up in my headphones, took a topless selfie and wrote some jokes before walking to my sets at the Comedy Cellar. I can barely choose a “Cruel” lyric to share, because I love all of them, but I’ll go with the opening line: “Angel on my shoulder till I lost it / I’m barely out the door and she’s exhausted.”



I wasn't introduced to stand-up until I was 18 years old, and after deciding I wanted to try to be one I avoided watching it altogether: I was terrified of stealing material or a persona. Now I'm in a place where I can watch stand-up, but it's harder to elicit laughter because I've seen too much and know the tricks. This special, taped in 1979, took me on a ride and made me laugh out loud. Pryor is everything I aim to be: silly, dark, real, subtle, animated, vulnerable. So while Pryor's name is probably not new to you, 41 years later the jokes are still relevant. I found that incredible and sad.

LAUGH

Richard Pryor: Live in Concert 1979

WATCH

Normal People

Seriously screw this show for making all other love stories complete trash, including the ones I've personally experienced. For starters *Normal People* is beautifully filmed in Ireland, Italy and Sweden. I've only been to one of those places and no one like Connell kissed me. The acting, direction and writing (based on Sally Rooney's novel) are so captivating that I'm hesitant to even try to describe them to you. Just know that if *Normal People* were written about the first time I fell in love, it would be filmed in southwest Ohio as one long shot of me talking on a landline in my closet after setting my AIM away message to an Uncle Kracker lyric. BDStelling: "Follow me. Everything is all right. I'll be the one to tuck you in at night. And if you want to leave I can guarantee you won't find nobody else like me."

Does it count as reading if you listen to it? The new age-old question. This book was recommended to me by comedian Charla Lauriston when we were writing on season 3 of *The Last O.G.* It's a compilation of advice columns that Strayed wrote anonymously, mostly for the online literary magazine *The Rumpus*. So the cat's out of the bag that Sugar is Strayed, and her book offers superb life and love advice from someone you know has lived without bumpers. I liked the audiobook because it's narrated by Sugar herself, in a calming voice that tempers some of the heavier essays.

READ

***Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar* by Cheryl Strayed**



Man in His **DOMAIN** **Chris Brickley**

The NBA skills coach built a career out of helping athletes train. Get to know the man with the VIP gym, famous friends, a bevy of brand deals and one unexpected pandemic pivot

BY SOWMYA KRISHNAMURTHY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GUY LOWNDES

There's no place like home If Chris Brickley clicked his heels three times, it would be in black-and-white Puma sneakers—size 12—and matching Gucci socks. No matter where he is, he wants to return here—his gym in the heart of Manhattan.

"This is my place," he says, affectionately kicking the gleaming hardwood. "This is my love."

The NBA trainer reigns over perhaps the most famous gym in the world. Dubbed the Arena, Brickley designed the basketball court to be his oasis. Before the pandemic hit, he spent up to 14 hours here on any given day. Carmelo Anthony, D'Angelo Russell and James Harden could be spotted running drills or in pickup games during the off-season. Rapper J. Cole works on his shot here. So does Meek Mill. Earlier this year, before coronavirus, Justin Bieber and Quavo challenged Drake to a friendly match at the Arena that overshadowed the All-Star Weekend Celebrity Game.

The space—nestled inside Summit, a luxury high-rise with a sweeping glass lobby, indoor waterfall and panoramic vistas—opened in February 2019. A grayscale New York City skyline wraps the gym walls, the neutral motif accented by the orange splash of basketball rims. It's a calm respite from the hustle of Midtown. "This is a therapeutic place," Brickley says.

The Arena is invite-only, but social media—especially during the NBA's lengthy lockdown—has amplified the gym to legendary status. Brickley shares vignettes on Instagram that often go viral, aggregated by sports and celebrity media. TMZ even camps outside sometimes, ostensibly looking for a scoop or sound bite. Hip-hop usually pipes out of the gym speakers, but this afternoon it's quiet and empty.

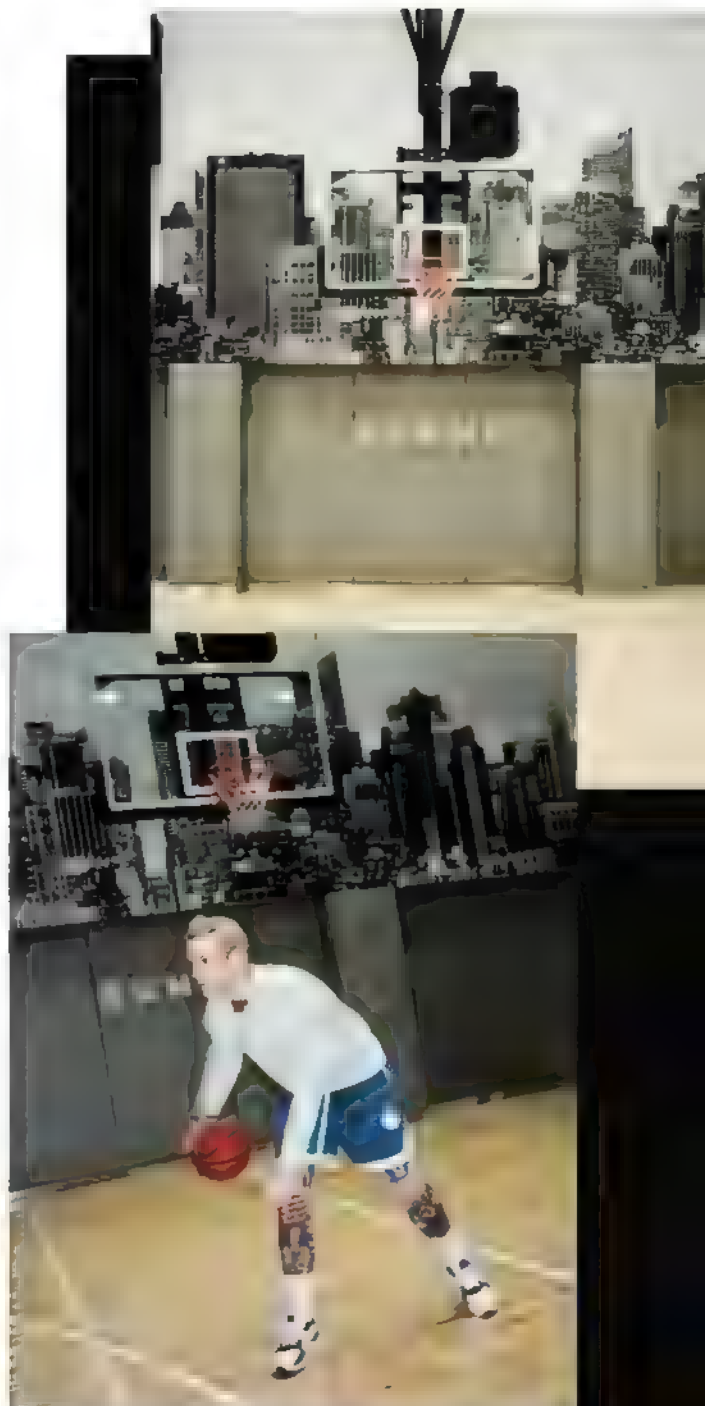
At 34, Chris Brickley is living a basketball fever dream. He was the first trainer to sign his own sneaker deal with Puma Hoops and the first trainer to be given a character in NBA2K20. "You keep working the way you did, the sky's the limit," his doppelgänger avatar says, in his voice. "Hit me up next time you want to work. I basically live in the gym." Last year, Brickley starred in and executive-produced the ESPN+ docuseries *Declared*, about prospects trying to level up to the pros, which landed him a spot on national TV as a commentator during the 2019 NBA draft. When I saw him in Chicago this February for All-Star Weekend, his itinerary was dizzying: hanging with the owners of the New York Knicks, Minnesota Timberwolves and Sacramento Kings; a basketball clinic at a community center; brunch with entrepreneur Gary Vaynerchuk.

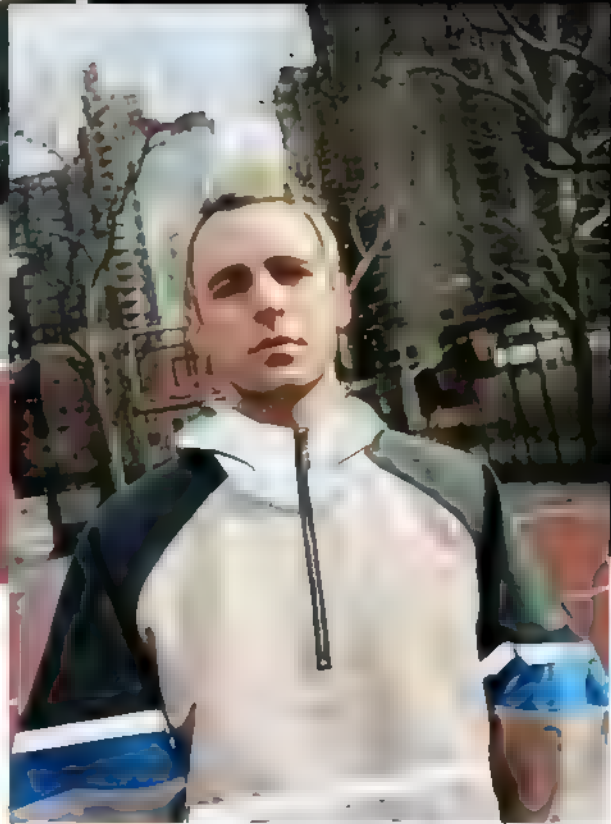
As his NBA2K20 character implies, Brickley really does live for work. He calls his gym his "girlfriend," and his two phones don't ever seem to stop buzzing. He has 1,200 unread texts and a deluge of direct messages.

"I feel like every week, there's something new I could be doing," he says in a pleasant New Hampshire accent. Hold on just a second—an A-list rapper is blowing him up. Okay, he's back. He sleeps three, maybe four hours a night. Even during relaxed moments he's often scribbling in the notebooks that are his constant companion, documenting his ideas, plans, hopes. It's about pushing himself. "I need to keep doing things that are special," he says. "I need to keep signing deals that no one's ever done."

Chris Brickley grew up wanting to hoop. As a kid, his favorite team was the Boston Celtics; he'd pretend he was Peter "Pistol Pete" Maravich on the court. At Trinity High School in Manchester, New Hampshire, Brickley was twice named

"There's no medicine that makes me feel better. I guess if you really want to break it down, basketball has saved my life."





athlete of the year At six-foot-four, he played a couple of seasons at the University of Louisville before pivoting into coaching. Things lined up. He became the youngest Division I assistant coach in the NCAA in 2011 and joined the New York Knicks in player development in 2013. A wunderkind, he impressed the likes of coaching legend Phil Jackson, but beneath the veneer of success Brickley was struggling.

"Every year, I was living check to check," he says. As he nurtured relationships with high-profile pros like Carmelo Anthony and J.R. Smith, he was also coping with low moments—eviction notices and bank overdrafts were a regular part of Brickley's life. But by 2016 he was confident enough in his growing Rolodex to venture out on his own. Leaving a steady gig with the Knicks—what many would see as a dream job—seemed beyond risky to some.

"My family was mad. My friends didn't understand. I didn't have health insurance," he says. "But I just truly believed in myself, knew that this was going to work out for me."

Brickley's gamble paid off. Today not only are his training talents in high demand, but his name as well: In April, he partnered with Chipotle for a namesake burrito bowl and in August, he announced a deal with streetwear reseller StockX. With nearly 1 million Instagram followers, he's become a bona fide influencer. Before the pandemic hit and sent everyone inside, it was hard to walk down the street with him—be it in SoHo, Harlem or Chicago—without somebody vying for his attention. Fans who want to dap him up, take a selfie or just smile and softly murmur, "Hey, Brick," in passing.

Building relationships—be it with brands, fans or basketball players—is the crux of Brickley's style. Tactical skills aside, when he's in training mode, it's imperative that he connect with his player. What motivates him? What makes him tick? Friendship and trust are key. "You can know all the basketball stuff in the world, but if you don't have a relationship with the players, they're not going to really listen to you," he tells me. Brickley also does his homework. As Kevin Porter Jr. of the Cleveland Cavaliers said on *Declared*, "He knows your game before you even step foot on the

court. Before the first workout."

"Chris has created a sacred space," says Graham Betchart, a mental-skills coach who works with players like Aaron Gordon and Ben Simmons and has seen Brickley training. "It's a safe place for these athletes to come be themselves. And for most of them, they don't have many safe places." It's a judgment-free zone where men can let down their guard. Adrenaline pumping, it's not uncommon to talk about life, relationships, whatever. Says Brickley, "They can come in here and they can be vulnerable. And they know no one's judging them."

Brickley is candid about his own tribulations, including his difficult childhood with a mother who lived with mental illnesses and died by suicide in 1993. "She was sick. I know she loved me and she was just going through hard times." Several of his tattoos commemorate her. As an adult, he can empathize with what his mother must have gone through, and mental health awareness is a cause to which he is committed. Whenever he needs to untangle dark or complex feelings, he returns to his place of catharsis.

"There's no medicine that makes me feel better. It's the gym," he says. "I guess if you really want to break it down, basketball has saved my life."

The fact that Brickley is able to speak openly about his personal sorrows reflects something larger: Basketball stars are increasingly part of a paradigm shift in masculinity and mental health, going public about issues that previously would have remained private. Kevin Love of the Cleveland Cavaliers wrote a 2018 essay, "Everyone Is Going Through Something," about his panic attack;



it went viral. Love was inspired to open up in part thanks to DeMar DeRozan, then of the Toronto Raptors, who had come forward about his depression and anxiety. "It's one of them things that no matter how indestructible we look like we are, we're all human at the end of the day," DeRozan told the Toronto Star.

The loss of Lakers legend Kobe Bryant earlier this year shook the world of basketball. The league collectively grieved, with men in the spotlight expressing their pain and emotion. "Today is one of the saddest days in my lifetime," said Dwyane Wade on Instagram. Trae Young of the Atlanta Hawks broke down in his mother's arms before a game. Countless others shared their devastation on social media. For Brickley, it was poignant. "I see the players' vulnerable stages. It really touches me when you start seeing them do it publicly."

Normally, Chris Brickley lives for summer. When the NBA season is over, his gym comes alive—he anticipates it for months. But this year the coronavirus pandemic changed all that. In March, New York City shut down gyms, along with pretty much everything else, and the trainer's plans were put on hold.

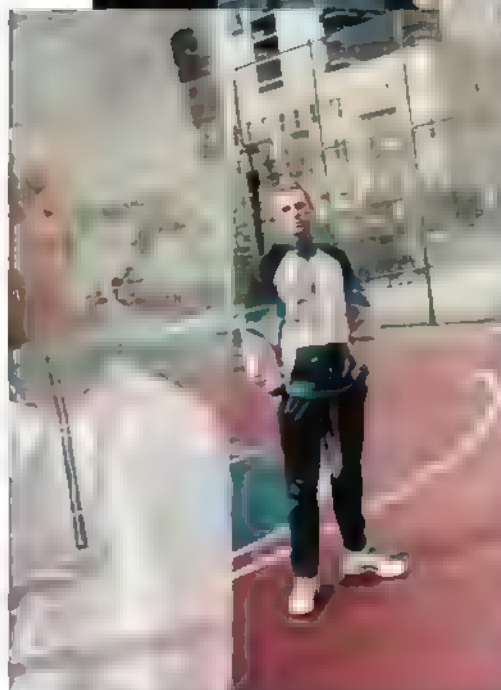
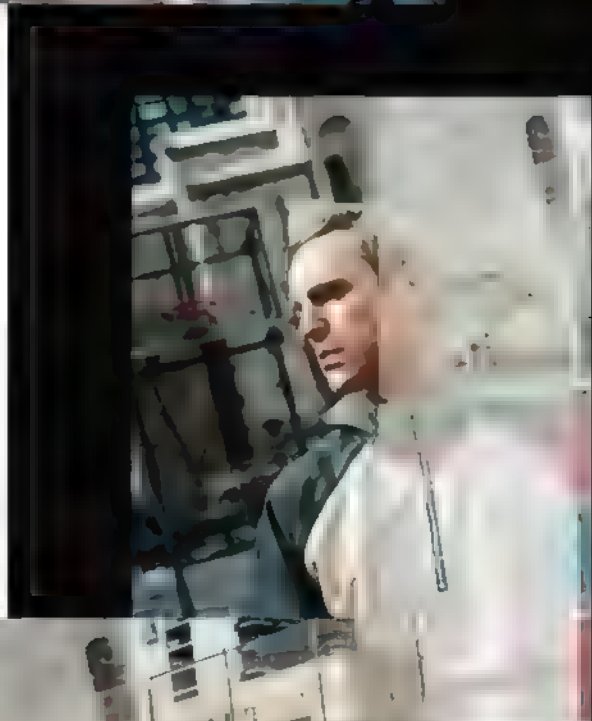
"It hit me crazy because this is usually my time," he tells me via Zoom in July. "This is usually my busy time, doing 10 workouts a day, seven days a week. It's tough."

Brickley has been in the gym intermittently during lockdown, hammering out new drills and occasionally doing socially distanced workouts. College star Cole Anthony, who declared for the 2020 draft, was one of the few players who came in for a late-night session.

As the NBA tests its grand quarantine experiment at Disney World inside the so-called bubble, the new normal has been a challenge for Brickley, and not just in terms of his training dropping off. "When you're a social person and you thrive off of other people's energy, and you don't have that, you have to figure out other ways to get it."

So the trainer is funneling his energy into new creative endeavors, including a compilation of workout anthems called *Welcome to the Grind*. "Every time we work out, music is such a big thing," he says. Brickley envisions the album, which he describes as a hip-hop update of Jock Jams, as a way for fans to soundtrack their sessions like the pros and to reproduce a slice of the Arena's atmosphere inside their own homes. Executive-produced by Dave East and Lil Durk, *Welcome to the Grind* will feature tracks from artists that Brickley has forged friendships with through the years. Meek Mill, Travis Scott and Justin Bieber are likely contributors.

Brickley is targeting an early 2021 release for the project, hopefully, that time frame coincides with a return to some semblance of normalcy for the country. Until that point, everything is up in the air. Like the rest of us, he's just figuring out how to ride out the pandemic. But for now, you can find him at his gym.







SHE OWNS
HEARTS

Layla
Banks

Instagram: @LaylaBanksVip













Such an absolute honour to have you on feature Playboy! How has your journey in the industry shaped your personal growth? I love the person I have become but I love that my pure heart has never changed, even more through it all.

What are some of your biggest dreams you hope to achieve? I hope to invest in many homes in different areas.

If you could talk to your younger self, what would you say to her? Do more for yourself and always take care of your needs.

What's one thing that you've learned from your journey as an influencer that you wish you knew when you started? Growth might be slower when you're real.

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you? I love my hair played with.

What are the top 3 best moments of your career? Investing, helping family, traveling.

What is your favourite chill time activity? I don't get to nap often, so I do enjoy them even more.

We are taking you out on your ultimate date, and we really want to knock this one out of the ballpark. What would that entail? I love fancy dinners, sporting events, and anything by the water and some sunshine.

What are, hands down, your absolute favourite things to do? I love being around family and traveling.

Who or what motivates you to keep pushing forward? My cousin, who always answers my calls.

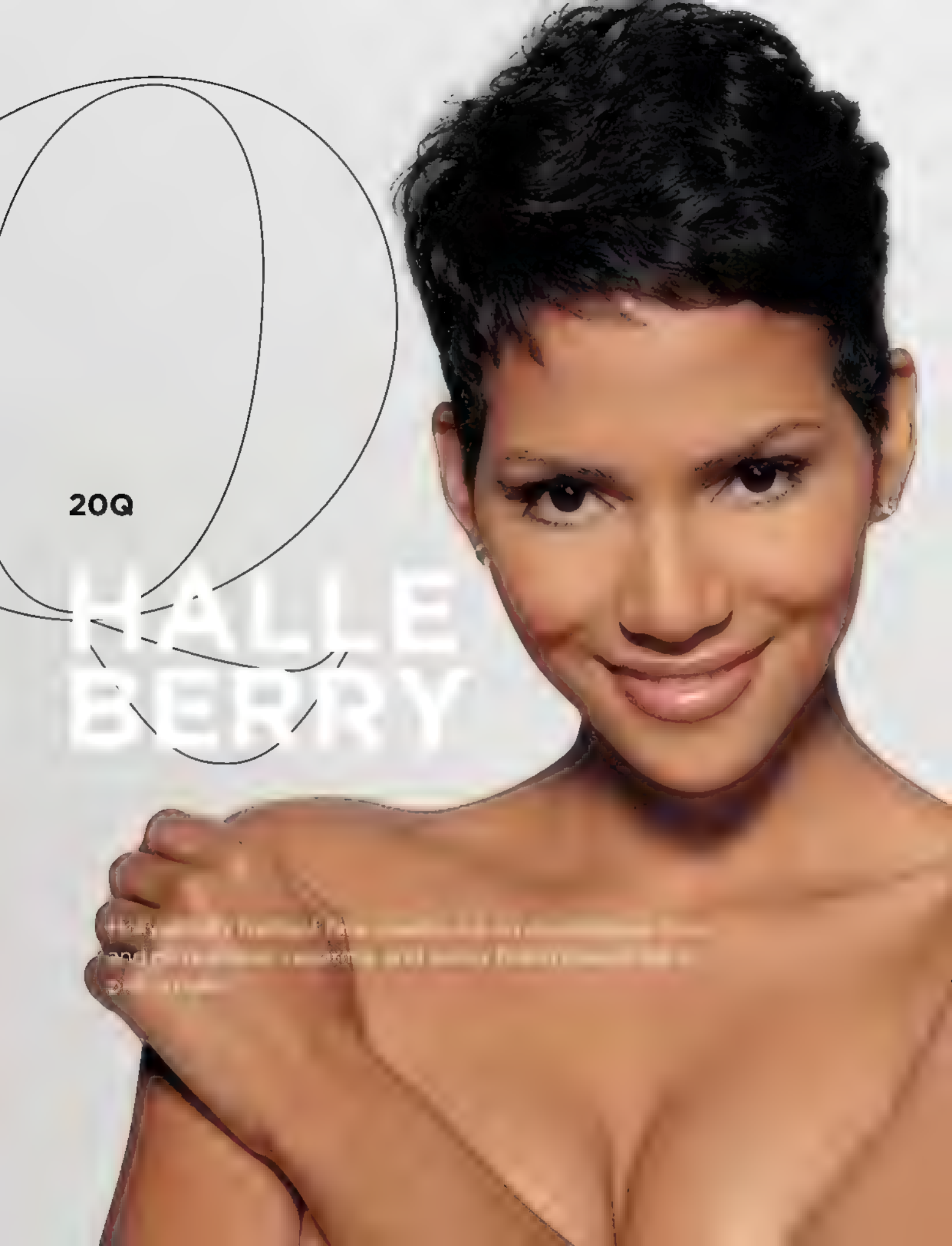
You have one last chance to do something you have always wanted to do, with no limits on anything. What are you doing? Travel the universe.

What's a lesson you've learned that changed the way you approach life? How cruel the world can really be.

If you weren't in the entertainment world, what career would you love to explore? Being an Anesthesiologist.

Where can our readers catch up with you and stay updated with your work? Follow me on Twitter @LaylaBanksVip.



A close-up portrait of Halle Berry with short, dark, curly hair, smiling slightly. She is wearing a strapless top. On the left side of the image, there is a large, thin-lined circle. Inside the circle, the text '20Q' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below '20Q', the name 'HALLE BERRY' is written in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the circle, there is a line of small, faint text that is partially obscured by the portrait.

20Q

HALLE
BERRY

For a complete list of the 20Q questions, visit www.20q.com
and see how well you know the actress.

Halle Berry, the 25-year-old Cleveland-born actress and former beauty pageant contestant, knows how to leave a lasting impression. She brought an earthbound sweetness to *Strictly Business* and *The Last Boy Scout* and straight-backed dignity to the six-hour miniseries *Queen*. For Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever*, she gave a rancid-mouthed crackhead some dimension. In *Boomerang*, Berry turned her third-lead, nice-girl art director into an impressive scene-stealer.

Now Berry is taking off in another direction, showing up as Rosetta Stone, a slithering, prehistoric temptress in Universal's *The Flintstones*, co-starring John Goodman and Elizabeth Taylor. Midway through the shoot, we sent writer Margy Rochlin to speak with Berry at her West Hollywood hotel room: g"The first thing Halle did," says Rochlin, "was offer me a weak handshake and admit that the idea of a long interview made her nervous. Then she threw herself down on her white couch and blabbed for the next two hours. She kept pleading, g'If you get bored, just tell me.' She never gave me a reason to."

Q1: *In order to prepare for your role as a crack addict in *Jungle Fever*, you didn't bathe for 10 days. What is the upside of skipping your morning shower?*

BERRY: It was a freeing experience. We are so civilized. We have to be clean and smell nice and look pretty. It was refreshing just to let myself go and not care.

I dread getting up in the morning and taking a shower, putting on makeup and fixing my hair. With that role, I could just pop out of bed, have my breakfast and go. I didn't even brush my teeth. You know how you get those little razor bumps when you shave under your arms too much? I didn't have that. And when I finally did shave, it was like a baby's bottom under my arms. I was showing everybody: p"Look how pretty my underarms are!"

Q2: *Did a different sort of guy start following you home?*

BERRY: The bums! [Laughs] The bums were like, m"Hey, baby, you're looking pretty good." It was funny because I'd actually talk to them. Some of them are crazy; they really need to be in a mental institution. But others really do have something to say. They're just down on their luck.

Q3: *We know about the straw, blue, rasp and cran. What distinguishes the Halleberry?*

BERRY: The Halleberry is a very sweet berry, and that's important. Being sweet and nice to people goes a long, long way.

Q4: *When can a lady use four-letter words?*

BERRY: When I'm really in the mood or pissed off, I can curse with the best of them. That is so much a part of me. But I curse only when I'm with my friends—I don't do it in public. In *Jungle Fever*, I could do and say whatever I wanted because I was that character. I could say m"Fuck everybody!" I had all these fantasies that I would tell Spike to fuck himself. But I never did.

Q5: *What's something that your husband Atlanta Braves outfielder David Justice, doesn't appreciate about you that a movie director would?*

BERRY: That I cry a lot. When I cry my husband sometimes doesn't react like there's a woman crying but says, g"Come on, stop crying." If I didn't cry all the time, maybe he'd be more frantic like he's supposed to be. But I'm just real emotional. I cry when I'm mad, I cry when I'm sad, I cry when I'm happy. I cry a lot. Except when I'm doing a film. When they say "cry," all of a sudden I get dry.

Q6: *What do you do when you go to the ballpark and your husband goes 0 for 4?*

BERRY: I couldn't care less. I love him no matter what he's batting. But I feel bad for him because I know he's going to feel really down about it. He's going to take the heat from the press, from the fans. I hurt for him.

But I don't go to the games anymore unless they're All-Star or playoff games. Now I watch them on TV. Whenever I was home, I would always go to the stadium and sit there and be a good wife. But I get so frustrated when he's not having a good day. I hear people saying, p"Justice, you suck!" "Trade him!" Or he'll come up to bat and they'll say, "This time try to hit something besides air!" I take it personally. He's my baby, and I just don't like it. If I weren't Halle Berry, I would go off on some of those people. I feel like saying, "Hey, buddy, can you hit a ball going 95 miles an hour? Then shut the fuck up!" That is the ultimate fantasy.

Q7: *How did you make your peace with baseball?*

BERRY: I had to make a real effort at first. Those games are long. At my first baseball game, I was ready to go after an hour. Once I started to learn about the game—the intricate parts of it, the pitches, the plays, how to keep score—that made the time go by. Now I can sit through a three-hour game and think, Wow, where did the time go?

"I dread getting up in the morning and taking a shower, putting on makeup and fixing my hair."

Q8: *You were first attracted to your husband when you spotted him on MTV. If someone hadn't hooked you up, what would have been your next move?*

BERRY: I had it all planned out, which is kind of sick. I was in South Carolina making *Queen*, and I was going to have my sister go with me to a Braves game. I was going to come up with some reason why I had to go down into the tunnel. I mean, I wasn't going to come on to him. I had just gotten over a really bad relationship and I had banned men for at least a year.

But I just knew that if I could look him in the face, he'd fall in love with me and I'd fall in love with him.

I'd already started to go through the motions. I found out when the team was going to be in Atlanta and I tried to plan my flight. Then all of a sudden it hit me: No man's going to want a woman this desperate. I'm going to look like an asshole.

Then, two weeks later a guy called me from one of the Cincinnati papers to interview me. At the end he said, p" You know, I've never done this before, but I have a really good friend who absolutely adores you and would love an autographed picture." I said, "Who?" And he said, "David Justice of the Atlanta Braves." I dropped the phone on the floor. I said, "Give him my phone number instead of an autograph." So an hour later David called me and we talked for three hours. We hit it off like [snaps fingers] that.

Q9: *Given the relative sexiness of baseball players, why did you go after a power hitter rather than a relief pitcher?*

BERRY: Pitchers can look just like regular guys—short and kind of scrawny. Power hitters generally have better bodies and butts. They're stronger.

Q10: *You've been a lustful reference in at least one rap song. Is this something you support or condone?*

BERRY: I have a real problem with all those songs that refer to women as bitches or in other derogatory terms. I don't listen to them, nor do I buy them, nor do I encourage others to. People I know say, g" Well, I don't listen to the words, I like the beat." They don't realize that subconsciously they're hearing the words. It's degrading. As women, we're fighting so hard to be viewed in another way. I don't like my name associated with it. I know they think they're giving me a compliment, but I don't see it that way.

Q11: *In 1985 you were Miss Teen All American. In 1986 you were first runner-up for Miss USA. As the veteran of many beauty pageants, tell us: What makes a bad loser and what makes a bad winner?*

BERRY: After the pageant, the bad loser will go around bad-mouthing everything. She'll put down the girl who won: g" Look at her—she has fake tits! She has acne!" Just being obnoxious. She can't get over the fact that she lost. "Hello? You didn't win, goodbye, go home now."

A bad winner? I know this after judging pageants. During the interview these girls give their perfect pageant answers: p" Yes, I'd like to save the world." Then afterward at the dinner with the winners, these girls turn into total snobs. They've already used you and abused you and gotten what they wanted out of you—the crown. Then they're like monsters.

Q12: *How did your more highbrow colleagues respond to the news that you'd signed on for *The Flintstones*?*

BERRY: It's amazing how people can be so negative. Some people have said to me, g" The Flintstones? That's a cartoon. I thought you wanted to be a serious actor. You just did *Queen*. I mean, Halle!"

But not everything's going to be *Queen* or *Malcolm X*. This film was really important to me because to be a black woman and to be the object of everybody's desire in this movie is such a coup. The fact that these executives at the studio, who are all white males, took the risk to have a black woman as this character says a lot as to where we're going. No, we don't want to be just sex objects or be just beautiful. But the level of consciousness is being raised, and that's important to me. We're starting to be seen a little bit differently.

Q13: *You haven't shown your revealing Flintstones costume to your husband. To soften the blow, are you going to give him an exclusive preview?*

BERRY: No! He'll just see it on premiere night, if he can. He worries a lot about that kind of thing. I'd cause him a year of undue stress if I involved him with it. He's read things like, g" She hasn't shown her husband," so he's like, "Well, what is it?" But sometimes the less he knows, the better. When it comes out, he'll see it. He'll see that it is what it is.

Q14: *"It" is?*

BERRY: Very bare. A long fake-fur skirt with those jagged edges and a split all the way up the side. The top is tight, very pushy-uppy. Thun straps, barely there. It's like a bikini. But more than actually seeing the costume, it's what I do in the costume that makes it even worse. I seduce Fred. I slither around, crawl over desks and use everything I have to get him entranced—which I do pretty much throughout the whole movie. He's putty in my hands.

Q15: *No matter what film you're in, you're always the one who receives the kudos. Are your co-stars wary or curious about such a record?*

BERRY: Hmm. Did you read my reviews for *Queen*? There were a few that really hit me hard. The harshest thing somebody said was that I didn't have the emotional range or capacity that this character needed. I thought, Say a lot of things, but I don't think that's true. I'm the most emotional person I know. They could have said other things—that I was stoic or stiff—but not that I don't have the emotional range.

I've learned not to take it personally. But it's hard. I gave my blood, sweat and tears for that role. I was working with a broken tailbone, in pain. So when someone just uses a stroke of the pen to dismiss what I've worked so hard at, it's disheartening.

Q16: *Is it easier for a film critic to like the work of someone who might actually be a nice person in real life?*

BERRY: Yes, that certainly was the case with me and Robin Givens in *Boomerang*. People thought I played myself and she played herself. Robin has gotten such bad press because of what she did to







Mike Tyson. So many people in the business think she's bitchy. People won't feel sympathetic toward her until she starts doing nice things in her personal life and people start writing about it. The image you portray is important. People ultimately have to like you to pay seven bucks to see you in a film.

Q17: *Every woman of the Nineties needs a method of self-defense. Have you ever been in a fight? If so, who won?*

BERRY: Oh, yeah. Not in my adult life, since I'm now old enough to know better. Growing up I would get beat up a lot, I'm passive. I don't like confrontation. So sometimes people would pick on me because they knew I wouldn't fight back. But sometimes I'd stand up for myself, and I would end up in a fight. And, usually, I would get beat up—but only because it would be three or four of them and one of me. It made me stronger. If I ever fought one-on-one, I'd probably kick somebody's ass because I'm used to fighting four at a time. If I ever got into a fight with Robin Givens, I'd probably kill her. [Laughs]

Q18: *Let's focus on another of your daring adventures in role preparation. Before you played an exotic dancer in *The Last Boy Scout*, you paid the owner of a club to let you dance in a bikini top and G-string. What's the view from the perspective of a stripper?*

BERRY: It's a bunch of drooling, drunk men looking up your underpants. Nothing against the girls who do it, but it was humiliating for me. You're just a thing. They're saying things to you.

Q19: *What comments did you appreciate? And what should have been left unsaid?*

BERRY: I didn't appreciate any of them—until I was walking out and one of the guys said to me, g' "Sweetheart, you don't belong here. Get out."

Q20: *As a teenager you worked in clothing stores. What life lessons did you pick up while behind the cash register?*

BERRY: When I worked in retail, the customer was always right. No matter what they do or what they think, the customer is always right. They forget that out here in Hollywood.





To Cyber Sex From a Cam Girl

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You open your favorite messaging app to start a video call with your significant other. The line trills until you see their face emerge onto the screen in front of you. You laugh and say hello, but now what? With the constant stressors of 2020, you might find yourself too depressed or uncertain about how to tend to your relationship despite wanting to explore intimacy. Cyber sex with a partner can be overwhelming for couples camming together for the first time, with a global pandemic separating us from each other, there aren't many other opportunities to connect.

I applied what I learned from years as a cam girl to my own long-distance relationship with a spouse who has traveled frequently for both military deployments and a civilian job. Although my spouse and I are quarantining together, we've spent most of our marriage navigating time apart—and maintaining our sex life from a distance kept us healthier as individuals while also strengthening our bond.

If you want to try cybersex but you aren't sure how to get started, these tips will help you and your partner enjoy the experience once the camera blinks on.

Make Time for “The Talk”

Sending a few unannounced nudes won't help you get this conversation started. It's important to discuss risks, goals and boundaries before you send anything steamy. Embrace your own vulnerability by explaining why you want to try cybersex and gauge your partner's comfort level.

Honest, thorough discussions were a critical part of keeping me safe and comfortable during sex work—and also ensured that we'd both find authenticity and affirmation in the encounter. Establishing goals and boundaries makes that possible and keeps everyone on the same page. It's crucial that all parties completely consent to the activities you'll pursue together and that everyone's needs are met.

Even if you have a comfortable, secure sex life together in person, your online time together will be a different experience. If you're feeling too shy or inexperienced to talk about what you're open to exploring, use Kindu or similar apps to initiate those conversations. If you've been doing this for

a while, but you aren't really fulfilled by the encounters, talk about what you'd like to change.

Find an App You Both Trust

Even in a trusting relationship, sensitive data can still be leaked if someone intercepts images, videos or live feeds. You'll need to decide together if that risk influences whether you'll show your faces or private areas of your bodies on cam. To mitigate some risk, I recommend using Signal because of its end-to-end encryption and other safety features. If you're interested in incorporating toys, try Lovense, which offers interactive sex toys that allow couples to control each other's experiences from a distance. You can try other toys that offers similar features, but I like this one for its secure platform.

Choose a Comfortable Spot

And plan to be there a while. I always appreciate spending time together before getting to the deed. It's like foreplay to foreplay if we can to share a game or laugh together. Instead of hopping on camera already in the nude, treat this experience like a date. You're spending time with someone you know and care about, so make sure they know they mean more to you than the sex itself.

When it's time to get down to business, you'll have settled into your cozy nook. Check in with each other to make sure you're both ready before transitioning to intimacy. Don't be the person who just, well, whips it out—unless you know you're both into that.

Spy on Each Other

If you've been at this a while or you want to be more adventurous, consider moving to a less traditional location where you can be more playful—like the shower, outside in a secluded backyard or on the kitchen table with some dessert. Of course, you could interact with your partner during this time, but I think it's fun to pretend I don't even know they're watching. Bring a desk lamp with you to act as a spotlight or choose a space with natural sunlight if you want your part-

On a video chat, I once made my partner come by eating apple slices, and you could entice your partner with another sexy treat.

ner to see you well. Opt for a darker room for a grittier, voyeuristic experience.

Use More of Your Senses

Cyber sex often focuses on the sights and sounds on-screen, but it's just as important to make sure you enjoy the tastes, smells, and touch of the experience. On a video chat, I once made my partner come by eating apple slices. You could entice your partner with another sexy treat. Prepare the same meal or eat a similar dessert together if you want to feel connected. Dim the lights and light candles to set the mood for yourself. Use a clothing item that smells like your partner or order some of their signature scent to make them feel closer. Enjoy the experience as a holistic encounter if you need help feeling present or want to pamper yourselves.

Tease and Tempt

It's empowering to be a bit of a tease. Experiences where both my partner and I remain modest are often even sexier and more exciting for me. The outfits you're used to seeing each other in—lounge clothes, a work uniform or office attire—will likely feel familiar but invoke a sense of longing if you've been apart for a while.

If you prefer not to strip and show off your bodies, watch each other's lips, listen to each other's whispers and moans, and notice each other's subtle reactions in the shoulders or brows. Look right at the camera lens instead of the screen to appear as though you're gazing deeply into your partner's eyes. Bite your lip or smirk to let your partner know you're feeling naughty. The tension in these moments will help you build enough confidence to take it to the next level if you choose, but sometimes teasing is all that's needed to get off.

Try New Positions

Most men I've shared these experiences with sit at a desk or in bed with their cameras pointed at their crotch, but I'm less intrigued by someone's pumping hand. There's nothing wrong with shoving your bottom up close to the screen or highlighting other private parts if you and your part-

ner prefer, but I long to watch facial expressions—especially a partner's eyes widening with exhilaration or closing slightly as they relax. If both partners are willing, incorporate some aspect of sharing your faces—even if it doesn't include the rest of your bodies—instead of solely swapping images of your genitals.

Your body's position will dictate how you're connecting with your partner, and it might make a big difference to both of you. Do you and your partner want an experience that's more romantic? Raunchy? Don't be afraid to request a shift in position or adjust your own camera as needed. This kind of communication is important, just like it's important to say something if a certain position, touch or rhythm isn't working when you're in person—or if you're dying to see part of your partner's body that they've been too shy to show.

If you want to direct each other, you could play a game of alternating Simon Says. Games, such as Sex Dice and Truth or Dare, will spice things up. Move around and play with the zoom as needed to show each other a new view.

Watch Yourself on Camera

I tend to keep my own camera's feed in a small box at the top center of my screen so I can keep an eye on what I look like as I also look into the lens. I feel more comfortable knowing exactly what I'm showing to my partner, and it can be fun to learn more about what my facial expressions and body look like while I'm in the zone. I suggest using this feature to help you explore your own body when you want to and hiding that view if it becomes too distracting.

Show Each Other What You Like

Although cyber sex doesn't have to be a tutorial, it's still a perfect format to show your partner how you love to be touched. Camming showed my spouse how to help me reach orgasm. I'm very familiar with my body, and a mobile camera lets me show them exactly what I want them to rub, lick or suck without the awkward fumbles of an in-person encounter. I get to say out loud what I want them to do to me without the pressure of them feeling like they need to

get there now.

Avoid using yes-or-no questions to lead the conversation. Say things like, "What do you wish I could do to you right now?" and "How should I use my hands and tongue?" Explain your own needs and use this opportunity to show while you tell. This time apart will help you come back together with an even stronger connection if you use the time to share about your desires and teach each other new moves on-screen.

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Playboy Interview

Whoopi Goldberg

A candid conversation with the outspoken actress and host about taking on the Hollywood establishment and Jesse Jackson, and why you better not call her African American

INTERVIEW BY DAVID SHEFF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

It wasn't Marilyn Monroe but Whoopi Goldberg, hair tumbling over her forehead, standing on the Radio City Music Hall stage facing the president of the U.S. at his 50th birthday party and threatening to sing p"Happy Birthday, Mr. President." "I was going to wear a blonde wig," she joked, "but I see that Jack Kemp already has the wig." The crowd—including Bill Clinton—roared

Clinton has long been one of Goldberg's biggest and most public fans, especially of her movie *Sister Act*. m"I wanted to be in that choir so bad I could spit," he said.) Besides hanging out with the Clintons and roasting Republicans on his behalf (a typical pre-election one-liner: "Will someone please introduce Lorena Bobbitt to Bob Dole?"), Goldberg has, for the better part of two decades, been working nonstop Dur-

ing the past year alone, she released three movies and served a second tour of duty as emcee of the Academy Awards ceremony. Her Oscar night performance was vintage Goldberg—provoking equal parts applause and outrage.

Wearing a black gown that won her top honors in one poll as worst-dressed woman, Goldberg set the tone at the best Academy Awards ceremony in years with a pointed



and hilarious monologue. She immediately took aim at some sacred targets. "I want to say something to all the people who sent me ribbons to wear," she said. "You don't ask a black woman to buy an expensive dress and then cover it with ribbons." She then fired off a list of ribbons that she chose not to wear. "I got a red ribbon for AIDS awareness. Done. I got a purple ribbon for breast cancer. Done. I got a yellow ribbon for the troops in Bosnia. Done. I got a green ribbon to free the Chinese dissidents. Done. I got a milky white ribbon for mad-cow disease. Done. Done. Done again."

She also ribbed actor Charlie Sheen, who gained attention for being a frequent (\$50,000) customer of Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss. Goldberg noted that three actresses who were nominated for Oscars—Sharon Stone, Mira Sorvino and Elisabeth Shue—portrayed hookers in the year's movies, and asked, "How many times did Charlie Sheen get to vote, anyway?"

But the most contentious part of the show came when she took on the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who had called for a protest against the Academy Awards ceremony, complaining that there was only one black nominee. "I had something I wanted to say to Jesse right here, but he's not watching, so why bother?" she said. In fact, she treated him and his protest with such thinly veiled disdain that a political firestorm ensued. She was sharply criticized by minority organizations, as well as by some producers and directors, who said that her remarks marginalized and belittled Jackson and the issue he raised: racism in the motion picture industry. But Goldberg also had her supporters, who thought the protest was inappropriate at an awards ceremony that was hosted by Goldberg, produced by Quincy Jones and featured other prominent African Americans, including Laurence Fishburne and Sidney Poitier.

As always, the attacks rolled off her back. A veteran of controversy, Goldberg has frequented the tabloids since her painful, tumultuous and well-documented affair with Ted Danson. The "tabloid twins," as Goldberg dubbed them, suffered a barrage of bad publicity when Danson left his wife and children for Goldberg. Things began to disintegrate for the couple after Danson made his infamous appearance at a Friars Club roast of Goldberg in 1993. Reciting material he and Goldberg wrote together, Danson, in blackface, told jokes that many denounced as racist. Several guests, including talk-show host Montel Williams, walked out. Others, such as New York mayor David Dinkins, Jackson and Dionne Warwick, attacked Goldberg and Danson in the press. The couple suffered a bitter and highly publicized split soon after.

Goldberg, who is 41, then wed for the third time—there were two brief marriages before, one in 1973 and the other in 1986—to union organizer Lyle Trachtenberg in 1994. After announcing their engagement, the couple married at her Los Angeles home, where the words fuck off were painted on the roof to frustrate airborne

media. The marriage ended a year later, and Goldberg is now in a relationship with Frank Langella, whom she met while filming the basketball movie *Eddie*, one of this past summer's quiet successes. As she has said, "It's been a hell of a time."

Goldberg was born Caryn Johnson in 1955. Raised by her mother, a nurse and Head Start teacher, Goldberg grew up "poor but never hungry" in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City. At the age of eight, she acted in children's theater and took the bus to museums, the ballet and plays. Despite her mother's best efforts, Goldberg could not escape the influences of her neighborhood. She admits she did "every drug" and dropped out of high school. "I couldn't pull it off." At 18, she married her drug counselor and got pregnant soon after—her daughter Alexandra, age 22, has her own daughter, and Goldberg is the proverbial doting grandmother. Goldberg made her living at a number of jobs—including doing makeup and fixing hair in a funeral parlor—and survived on welfare after heading to San Diego, without her first husband, in 1974. She then

moved to Berkeley and joined the Blake Street Hawkeyes Theater. It was there that she changed her name. (Her first name derived from whoopee-cushion jokes, her last was suggested by her mother to honor Jewish ancestors. The name led to a classic Milton Berle line: "A black woman with a Jewish name. She doesn't do window shades because she's got a headache.")

In the early 1980s, Goldberg developed *The Spook Show*, a one-woman tour de force with such unforgettable characters as a junkie with a heart of gold and a surfer chick who, in Valley Girl style, tells about her coat-hanger abortion. There were other theater pieces, including a brilliant tribute to one of her heroes, Moms Mabley.

Goldberg was discovered performing in New York by director Mike Nichols, who

brought *The Spook Show* to Broadway in 1984. It led to a Grammy-winning comedy album and a private performance for Steven Spielberg and some of his friends, including Michael Jackson. That, in turn, led to Goldberg's first film role as Celie, the abused but ultimately triumphant main character in Spielberg's version of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The performance earned Goldberg her first Golden Globe and an Academy Award nomination for best actress.

There have been more than 30 movies since. They have varied widely, from forgettable comedies to poignant dramas, including *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, *Burglar*, *Fatal Beauty*, *Clara's Heart*, *The Long Walk Home*, *Soapdish*, *The Player*, *Made in America*, *Naked in New York*, *Moonlight & Valentino*, *Theodore Rex*, *Sarafina!*, *Boys on the Side*, *Corrina, Corrina*, *Bogus* and *Eddie*, as well as her role as the voice of the head hyena in *The Lion King*. There have been blockbusters—*Ghost*, for instance, for which she won a Best Supporting Actress Oscar in 1991, and *Sister Act*, which led to a record-setting salary of \$8 million for the sequel (a box-office

"I'm not an African American. I'm pure-bred, New York-raised. Calling me an African American divides us further. I am as American as baseball. I don't have to excuse the fact that I am black-skinned."

disappointment). She also had a recurring role as Guinan, the psychic bartender, on the TV series *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and in the 1994 movie *Star Trek: Generations* and hosted her own syndicated TV talk show, *The Whoopi Goldberg Show*. In her most recent movie, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, she plays Myrlie Evers, wife of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers, in a drama directed by Rob Reiner.

Goldberg, who divides her time among a New England farm, a Manhattan apartment and a Hollywood home, was between films when Contributing Editor David Sheff sat down with her to begin the interview. Here's Sheff's report:

"Because her Manhattan apartment was being renovated, I met Goldberg at a hotel on the Upper East Side where Paul Davis, the artist and photographer, was taking glamour shots of her for a fund-raising performance. Goldberg batted her eyelashes at him and made self-effacing jokes about how she might have broken his camera. Although no one would describe her as a classic beauty, she nonetheless looked gorgeous, with her large brown eyes, crown of hair and smile that could melt ice.

"Goldberg was in a great mood after hanging out the night before with her pal Bill Clinton at his 50th birthday celebration. After the photo session, when we sat down in a private room at the hotel restaurant (where she indulged herself with bacon and Marlboros), she mused aloud about the unlikely company she now keeps. 'I'm exactly the kind of person the Secret Service is paid to keep away from most presidents,' she said. I mean, this is the president we're talking about. Not the president of the PTA, either.'"

PLAYBOY: Does Clinton have a good sense of humor?

GOLDBERG: He has a great sense of humor—he's hysterical. I'm convinced he wants to be a comedian.

PLAYBOY: Could he make it on the circuit?

GOLDBERG: I'd pay money to see him. And the First Lady—she is very funny too. We laugh a lot when we're together. I genuinely like them. I like them because they are real. I don't care about anybody's skeletons, you know, because I'm so busy holding back my own. But from my limited view, they are people who believe there is a better way. I trust them.

PLAYBOY: How does it feel to be friends with the president?

GOLDBERG: Shit, I get to talk to the president of the United States and have opinions that people are actually interested in. It is pretty groovy.

PLAYBOY: Groovy?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, I'm a hippie. Can't help it.

PLAYBOY: Meaning what?

GOLDBERG: Oh, all that good hippie stuff. I mean that I believe one person can make a difference, that we are responsible for other people. You know, peace and love. It's out of fashion, but it's really a great way to live. I believe in peace and brotherhood and all that stuff.

PLAYBOY: Are you trying to communicate these values in the movies you choose?

GOLDBERG: When I can, though I do all kinds of movies.

PLAYBOY: In *Ghosts of Mississippi*, you play the widow of NAACP leader Medgar Evers. Was that a labor of love?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, definitely. It's a true story that many people don't know about. Evers was killed in 1963 by a man named Byron de la Beckwith, who was tried twice by white juries and got off both times. I get to play Evers's widow, Myrlie. She's an incredible woman. She kept the flame of her husband alive for 30 years to make sure that the guy who murdered him—who shot him in the

back—went to jail.

PLAYBOY: Do you find it tough to play a living person?

GOLDBERG: Sure is. Myrlie was as much of a stretch for me as anything I've done. I kind of roll along down the street, carrying four bags at one time, a mess, and Myrlie Evers glides into a room. She is a presence. She lives in Oregon now, and I really wanted her to like the movie. She is happy with it, which was like, whew. You can't take a whole lot of liberties with people who can knock on your door and tell you how badly you screwed up the whole thing. Her response and the response of their children meant more than that of any others. Evers was murdered in front of those kids. He was shot and crawled to the front door and died in his wife's arms with the children standing there crying, g'Daddy, get up. Daddy, please get up."

PLAYBOY: Some people would say that Rob Reiner, who directed the movie, was not the one to tell this story, that stories about black people should be told by black people. Do you disagree?

GOLDBERG: I do. One reason black filmmakers tend to bring black stories to the forefront is that those stories aren't often told. But filmmakers should be able to tell whatever story they are inspired to tell.

PLAYBOY: You've been through this before. Steven Spielberg was criticized for making *The Color Purple*.

GOLDBERG: Yeah, and that's just as crazy. The fact is that Steven Spielberg [*she gets a huge smile*—I think he's the cat's pajamas. He is the best person and he made a beautiful movie. It is not about being black or white, it's about being a good storyteller. He is. So is Rob Reiner. Reiner is a king in my book. He's a joy to work with. I'm very lucky because now I'm working with more directors who know what they're doing.

PLAYBOY: As opposed to?

GOLDBERG: Let's just say that some of the directors I have worked with haven't known much of anything.

PLAYBOY: Can't you pick and choose the directors you work with?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, right. [Laughs] Unfortunately, I'm not in that position.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't clout come when you're a big box-office draw?

GOLDBERG: I do get more money, but the attitude becomes, g'We're paying you all this money, so shut up and do the work.' Which is why it has been said that I'm difficult. The best directors will tell you that I'm a pussycat. [*Smiles*].

PLAYBOY: Then what happens?

GOLDBERG: I just have ideas about the way things should work. I've been doing this awhile now, and I occasionally do have a good idea. The fact is, I'm a collaborator. I'm from the theater. The theater is based on collaboration. So I've learned to collaborate a lot more quietly.

PLAYBOY: Do movies suffer when directors don't listen?

GOLDBERG: Sister Act 2 is an example. I knew that you couldn't make that movie unless you had the nuns from the original movie in it. They were the driving force; people fell in love with them. I fought and fought and fought and fought to have them in the story, which contributed to my bad reputation.

PLAYBOY: Yet for that movie, you set a record for a female actor in Hollywood at that time—making \$8 million.

GOLDBERG: Maybe if I were more consistent, making lots of movies that made \$100 million, directors would listen. But my movies tend to be great movies that are critically acclaimed and make no money, or movies that aren't so critically acclaimed and make a ton of money, or those that aren't so critically acclaimed and don't make any money. Arnold's movies make a zillion dollars



no matter what he does, so he can do what he wants. Sly's movies tend to make a zillion dollars and he can do what he wants. Other people get paid a lot of money sometimes, and then get a lot more leeway than I get. But you can't spend time saying, g"She has it and I don't." You just can't.

PLAYBOY: Do you always go for creative control?

GOLDBERG: I always ask. The bottom line is that directors find I really do know a lot in terms of what needs to happen. I know how to fill the holes. I have turned a lot of shit into sterling silver.

PLAYBOY: So you agree with a critic from Time magazine who wrote, m"She has the ability to turn a routine flick into a pretty good movie entirely on her own."

GOLDBERG: Yeah. And imagine what I can do with a really good flick. But it goes back to how people visualize the world. They may think of me when they need a maid.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you once say that you would never play a maid?

GOLDBERG: No. I never said I wouldn't play a maid. I said that I wouldn't just play maids. But in the words of Hattie McDaniel, g"Better to play one than to be one." She used to get a lot of shit for the roles she was playing, too, but people don't realize that she wasn't turning down Scarlett O'Hara. Nobody said, "Hey, will you do Stella?" to which she said, "No, I've got to go play this maid!" In my case, I've never played a maid who wasn't a lead in the movie. And the story of these women, who clean other people's houses and take care of their children, is a worthy one to tell. Whether it's Corrina, Corrina or others, though, there are people who say, m"Oh, she's playing a maid again." I am happy to play a maid if the movie is good. In general, good movies don't always come to me—in fact, I go out and find work. I call people. I say, "I hear you're doing this movie and I want to be in it."

PLAYBOY: Who have you called recently?

GOLDBERG: I've been calling Clint Eastwood. He's getting ready to do a movie of a book that I thought was extraordinary, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. I would love to play the drag queen, Lady Chablis. He's probably going to end up using the real Lady Chablis, but I called. I said, m"I can play a man playing a woman, and I would love to do this. I can pull it off." Whatever he decides, I will continue to actively look for good roles. I want to make a movie about a really bad person. One of my favorite performances was Anthony Hopkins's in *The Silence of the Lambs*. At first you think you might want to get to know this guy, and then he says something that makes you back up and realize he will bite your face if you get close enough. Would I be somebody's first choice for a character like that? No. I wanted to do *Cutthroat Island* because I think I would be a great pirate—I could get real dirty and fight with a sword and still be sort of charming, I think. But I'm not statuesque and beautiful.

PLAYBOY: You mean, like the star of that movie, Geena Davis?

GOLDBERG: [Smiles] No, though I am very attractive and get cuter the older I get. I'm even getting—well, not statuesque, but I'm growing. [Laughs] I'm expanding. That's the best way to put it. But still no calls.

PLAYBOY: You're probably lucky that you didn't do *Cutthroat Island*. It flopped.

GOLDBERG: But it might have been a different movie, you know.

PLAYBOY: When are you thought of for movie roles?

GOLDBERG: I don't know. I've gotten a lot of movies when other actors dropped out. *Burglar* was for Bruce Willis, *Jumpin' Jack Flash* was for Shelley Long. *Fatal Beauty* was for Cher. Most of my career consists of movies that were meant for other people. I mean, thank God Bette Midler didn't want to do *Sister Act*.

PLAYBOY: Was it a letdown to go from serious works such as *The Color Purple* and your one-woman show, which touched on many social problems, to your next movie, *Jumpin' Jack Flash*?

GOLDBERG: No. It is a piece of fluff, but people still tell me how much they loved it. I've done some wild films, you know. Some weren't financially successful, but there are none I would hang my head to. That one and *Fatal Beauty* are mind candy. They're not going to fix the Bosnian problem, but they don't set out to. Also, everybody says, m"Well, why aren't you doing more *Color Purples*?" But that's not what people are asking me to do. It's not like somebody handed me another *Color Purple* and *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, and I said, m"I choose *Jumpin' Jack Flash*." At the time, however, I was just amazed to be doing what I was doing. It was other people who were criticizing me. I took heat for the movies I did, there were about four or five years of intense heat.

PLAYBOY: The gist of it was what?

GOLDBERG: That I didn't have it. That I was a flash in the pan. But I kept working. I tried to get other movies. When I heard they were making *The Princess Bride* into a movie I said, m"Let me audition for that." It was a big lesson for me about how it works and what you're supposed to look like. They laughed. "Is she crazy?" I said, "But the book is about a princess who doesn't look like anybody else, who has a very different attitude. So why not me?" It hurt my feelings because I thought, Are you telling me that because you think I couldn't be a princess that all these other doors are going to slam too? Basically, yes. So I took the stuff that nobody seemed to have a problem with me doing.

PLAYBOY: Like *Burglar*?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, which was fun and silly too. That was my macho period. I had the best time—motorcycles and leather jackets and blue contact lenses! Though when I did it I was criticized because I didn't turn out to be the female answer to Eddie Murphy.

PLAYBOY: Meaning?

*"Maybe I got married
a few too many times.
It's because I love a
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I've learned that."*

GOLDBERG: Meaning the movie didn't do Eddie Murphy business; it didn't produce tremendous amounts of money at the box office.

PLAYBOY: Sister Act did, though. How did that change things?

GOLDBERG: I received lots more money for some of the big movies, but great movies still didn't come flying at me.

PLAYBOY: After that movie, it was reported that you sent Jeffrey Katzenberg, the Disney executive in charge, a hatchet in the mail. Did you?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. Because he and I didn't click immediately. There were things about Sister Act that weren't as good as they could have been, and I tried to make them better—and Jeffrey thought I might have overstepped my bounds.

PLAYBOY: By giving ideas to the director?

GOLDBERG: Ideas?

Yeah. And they weren't really as open as I hoped they would be. I just wanted to make things better. I don't know what their experience had been with other actors, but we had an antagonistic relationship. I finally said, g"This is ridiculous." I sent him a hatchet and said, "Let's bury it," and he sent me back a present. [Smiles broadly] A pair of brass balls. And that began our friendship.

PLAYBOY: Ghost was another big success. How did that one come to you?

GOLDBERG: I heard about it and said I wanted to try for it, but my agent said they didn't want me. g"But why not? What did I do?" I said, "At least let me read for it." "Well, they feel you would bring Whoopi Goldberg baggage." "What is Whoopi Goldberg baggage? What does that mean?" So they wouldn't see me. Eventually I got a call, though. Patrick Swayze insisted they call me. He said he did it because he was a fan. Two weeks later I had the part.

PLAYBOY: The movie launched Demi Moore and brought you an Oscar. Did you expect it?

GOLDBERG: No. The statue came and it was pretty groovy, I have to say. Movies I thought would have gotten me nominated just fell by the wayside, such as The Long Walk Home, which is some of my best work. But nothing—nothing, nothing, nothing. So you just kind of go, g"Oh, well," and move on. But this was nice.

PLAYBOY: You've played more than one psychic. Are you interested in that world?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah. I'm a big believer that people are still

here. They aren't forced to stay, they're here by choice—they're here just watching. Some people were miserable in life and they're miserable in death, which is why we have loud and angry ghosts—their essence stays. A ghost to me is like perfume. Many people can dab it on and you get different wafts and different smells at different times. People who worked in this profession are with me at times.

PLAYBOY: Who?

GOLDBERG: John Garfield is with me. Parts of James Cagney, some Bette Davis. Moms Mabley is with me all the time. A great much of her is on my shoulder. Periodically, I feel wafts of Dorothy Dandridge. I mean, you look at me and think, Why you? My crossover has been pretty big—worldwide, in fact. So you have to believe that a whole lot of folks are behind you, helping you break it out.

PLAYBOY: Is it incomprehensible that you've accomplished what you've accomplished yourself?

GOLDBERG: I've always felt that smatterings of other people have made my path easier. Basically, I've had it laid out on a silver platter, I mean, really. It's been placed in my hand, and I've been ushered into a foreign land and treated rather well, you know. In hindsight, I've done a lot better than a lot of people with a lot more talent, and I didn't self-destruct.

PLAYBOY: But where does talent come in?

GOLDBERG: Jack Nicholson is talented. Brando. De Niro. I'm nothing compared with great actors like that. There are a lot of talented actors out there, but maybe the camera doesn't like their face or, you know, they're not good at auditions, or whatever. I just know I'm one of the luckiest people on earth.

PLAYBOY: Did The Player sum up your view

of Hollywood?

GOLDBERG: It was Robert Altman's view, but it's about right. It's that silly sometimes. Not quite murder, but you never know.

PLAYBOY: In Boys on the Side your character is a lesbian. Was it gratifying that the lesbian community applauded your portrayal?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. I did an interview with Lea DeLaria for The Advocate. She said, m"You were in, girl, you were in. We loved you." That was good to hear. People have asked, "Was it difficult to portray a lesbian?" No. It was just like I portray anybody else. I don't have to walk around in muscle shirts with a pack of Marlboros rolled up in my sleeve. The faces of lesbians have changed. They are no longer only short-haired, cigar-smoking, motorcycle-



riding women. These are real women. And I'm an actor. I can become whatever is required.

PLAYBOY: Including an elderly man in *The Associate*.

GOLDBERG: I play a woman who is really, really good on Wall Street—she takes care of all the business and is in a high position. But because she's black and a woman, she ain't going any higher. So she creates this man and suddenly everyone wants her—or him.

PLAYBOY: Though you've made hits and misses, is it still risky to be in a movie that bombs as badly as *Theodore Rex*, which went directly to video?

GOLDBERG: It seems it would be, but my career doesn't make much sense as it is. I should not have had the career I'm having. Normally, two or three box-office flops can murder a career. But I've had a few more of those. Yet despite everything, people seem to know that my potential is long-range. So they put me in movies. And people go to see my movies. *Eddie* opened in the middle of *Twister*, *The Rock* and *Independence Day* and did well. It didn't feature bombs exploding. It didn't have a shot of breasts. Nothing but silly fluff comedy, and it lived. That says something.

PLAYBOY: Were you a Trekkie before you joined the cast of *Star Trek*?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah. I love *Star Trek*, always have. I love science fiction, especially horror science fiction. I praised the heavens when the science fiction channel finally came. I love James Whitmore, the giant ants under L.A. I love *Them!* and *Village of the Damned* and *Planet of the Apes* and *The Omega Man*, which is one of my favorites. And *Soylent Green*. I love any of the old Universal horror stuff. I loved *Thriller*, the Boris Karloff TV show.

PLAYBOY: How about *The X-Files*?

GOLDBERG: I love *The X-Files*. I've been on Chris Carter for the past couple of years to do that show. He told me I have to find time. I just love the idea that there is this group in the government that knows all these strange things are happening. You know David Duchovny knows and is trying to find where his sister went in the link. It's just the best. The best.

PLAYBOY: Did *Star Trek* bring you a new type of fan?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes. I get a lot of mail from Trekkies. They send me pictures of themselves dressed as me. People put down Trekkies because they don't really understand what they are. The thing is, they are people who want this idea of the future to be real, where there's a united front and a future where all types of people hang together and fly through the galaxy and it is very hip.

PLAYBOY: As opposed to the *Independence Day* view of the future, in which aliens attack Earth?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, and this is what I have to say about *Independence Day*, though it is very unchie to say: I didn't care for it at all. It really bugged me. I was glad to see all those actors working, but if you're going to do *War of the Worlds*, then do it. Do it right. Pay attention. Don't put bucket seats with seat belts in an alien craft. Don't have a lady running down a tunnel with a fireball chasing her, and have the fireball pass her by and she doesn't even break a sweat. I mean, come on. Jeff Goldblum comes in drunk—he's throwing stuff around and his father says, "Get up off the floor, you're going to catch a cold." Goldblum gets up and says, "Catch a cold?" and he's sober as all get out. Wait a minute, you were drunk as a skunk a second ago! I want to know where all the clothing came from that the women were changing into once they got into the bunker. Was there a Gap down there? When Bill Pullman comes back and his little daughter is waiting, there is a woman holding her, and she gently thrusts the little girl toward Bill. The woman is wearing pearls—double-stranded pearls. And her outfit is newly pressed. I'm looking

at this woman thinking, Where the fuck did you come from? I was very bummed.

PLAYBOY: Would you like to travel in space?

GOLDBERG: Ooh, yeah. But I have to do more to prepare. Right now I can barely operate a computer. I'm very slow. I just play Jeopardy.

PLAYBOY: Have you been on the Internet?

GOLDBERG: The Internet is one of those things I'm not sure about. I just don't get it. And technology is moving at such a rate that I can't really keep up with it. I was in London recently, reading about these chips they want to put into little children. I'm not sure. I'm just not sure. I don't trust bar codes. Why can't I read them? Why can't I know what that bar code says? It's a secret code and we're kept out of the loop. Scary.

PLAYBOY: Have you seen any of the sites on the Web that cover you?

GOLDBERG: No, though I've heard it's all over the place, especially *Star Trek* stuff. And let me remind everybody who does those things that my birth date is November 13, 1955. For some reason, everybody has my birthday wrong in every biography. Let's get it right, y'all.

PLAYBOY: What was it like turning 40?

GOLDBERG: If you read stuff about me, I've been 40 for 10 years. I'm almost 60 in some circles.

PLAYBOY: Is the confusion based on your attempts to shave off a few years like other actors have been known to do?

GOLDBERG: I used to make myself older, not younger, because people would always tell me I was too young for the parts I was going after. So I gave myself two years. Now those two years have multiplied into eight or 10 or 20. In some reports I'm 43, some I'm 51, some I'm in my 30s, I'm 41.

PLAYBOY: Was it psychically difficult to hit 40?

GOLDBERG: No, I was so happy. I finally felt like I was growing into myself. I'm now growing into my face and growing into my thoughts, and I'm clearer about a lot of things. Everything is pretty great.

PLAYBOY: It's been written that you met Frank Langella on the set of *Eddie*—and he's your boyfriend of the moment.

GOLDBERG: g"Your boyfriend of the moment." Now does that sound trite or what? How about, "The man with whom I'm living and sharing my life." That's more elegant.

PLAYBOY: Do you plan to get married?

GOLDBERG: No. I'm just happy to be with him. He is wonderful. He is funny. It's one of the great things about our relationship—we get to laugh a lot. But I also have a great deal of respect for him. He is about the finest American stage actor we have. His work, since I was a young actor, was kind of like a goal. *Design for Living*, *Booth*, *Dracula*, *The Father*. Just endless. When I first met him on the set of *Eddie*, I said, "Why are you doing this movie?" He said, "This is probably the only way we'll ever get to work together."

PLAYBOY: So there was romance from the start.

GOLDBERG: [Smiles] Hoo-ha. But it was more about working together then. In my mind, I had to come up to his level. He's extraordinary and a really good guy. Which is not to say that the other men in my life haven't been. They were nice men, but somehow there's something extra extraordinary about this one. I'm taking it a day at a time. And, by the way, he's cute. I had to add that. He's fine, as my daughter would say.

PLAYBOY: By now, are you used to questions about your relationships?

GOLDBERG: I'm not used to it at all. It wasn't always like this. The public didn't really care until I got involved with Ted Danson. Since

then it has become a real thing in my life. It just doesn't go away.

PLAYBOY: How does it affect you?

GOLDBERG: It's hard enough to have a relationship, but to have a relationship under a microscope is harder. You always want to rebut everything you see that isn't accurate. I don't mind if you think I'm an asshole, but I want you to think I'm an asshole for the right reasons. It's hard on everyone around me. When it's really inaccurate it bugs the shit out of me.

PLAYBOY: Was the scandal over the Friars Club roast the low point for you and Ted Danson?

GOLDBERG: I had a good time at the Friars Club. It was funny.

PLAYBOY: Not everyone agreed.

GOLDBERG: No, but people who didn't get it were people who didn't understand what a Friars Club roast is. No one warned us that they had opened it to the public and that the people on the dais had no idea what the hell we were doing. I feel like we were set up. If people understood what a Friars roast was, they wouldn't have been shocked at all. And this was one of the funnier roasts that had been done. But sadly they chose to take something that was done in fun and turn it into a lot of bullshit.

PLAYBOY: Do you think people were genuinely offended, or was the reaction built up by the media?

GOLDBERG: I think they were genuinely offended.

PLAYBOY: Roast or no roast, do you disagree that blackface is simply bad taste—and is a form of true racism?

GOLDBERG: I do. Was it in bad taste? The Friars Club is in bad taste. That's the idea. It's about, g"Your ass is so wide that " or "Your mother gave head to " That's what it's about. RuPaul came out and talked about how he taught me how to give head. We were making a point.

PLAYBOY: What exactly was the point?

GOLDBERG: Even in hip Hollywood, there are people who are uncomfortable with a white man and a black woman. The stereotypes prevail. So I took them on. Ted and I used to get a lot of really hateful mail. We took it and pushed it to the limit. That was the point of Ted wearing blackface. Instead of people understanding, they looked at it as something they could jump on. I said then, as I say now, fuck them.

PLAYBOY: Fuck the black leaders as well as the black and white press that criticized you?

GOLDBERG: Fuck them. What makes me sad is that it made Ted very uncomfortable. For that I'm sorry. But I'm not sorry at all that we did it, nor that I encouraged it.

PLAYBOY: Do you think Ted is sorry that he did it?

GOLDBERG: Yes, I do think he's sorry he did it.

PLAYBOY: Because he cared what people thought?

GOLDBERG: He cared very much that people said he was a racist. I

wish him well. I hope his new show works and that his new marriage is happy. I hope one day we'll be able to sit down and talk about it with some laughter.

PLAYBOY: You don't speak now?

GOLDBERG: No, and I'm sure we won't for a very long time. I don't have any problem with what happened. But he does.

PLAYBOY: Did the hate mail come mostly from white extremists?

GOLDBERG: Them, and also from lots of black people. Black people were incensed. Again, I've never been politically correct and never will be politically correct, and I will go where I want to go.

PLAYBOY: Since the incident, have you spoken with any of the people who criticized you publicly—Montel Williams or Dionne Warwick?

GOLDBERG: I spoke with Dionne. I said, g"Look, you know what the Friars Club roast is." She said, "Yeah, but it got out." I said, "But that's not my fault. If you have a problem you should talk to the Friars Club." She said, "You're right." I don't have anything to say

to Montel because Montel went out for himself. He got the publicity he needed. He used us as a soapbox. I think in retrospect that he's unhappy he did it, because I think he's had a little firestorm of his own, and suddenly it occurs to him that that's what happens when someone puts your business in the street. Hey, it's OK. I'm going to piss people off again. I hope I'm not going to piss people off throughout my life.

PLAYBOY: Do you have a lot of time for your family?

GOLDBERG: More and more. I'm a workaholic, but I'm trying to take some breaks. We've been spending more and more time together. I'm cleaning baby spit off my shirt and playing with my granddaughter and watching her cannonball into the pool.

PLAYBOY: Your daughter's father was your first husband as well as your drug counselor. How did you meet and fall in love?

GOLDBERG: I felt I had better do

something because I didn't know what was coming. I got married, but it wasn't particularly right for either of us. I got pregnant and had this little baby, and I left my husband and went to San Diego. I had a couple of relationships and then didn't have a relationship for, like, six years. I met another man and had a five-year relationship, and he helped me raise my daughter. Then I came to New York and did my show, and it was tough on him, so he went away. And then I didn't get married. I went out with a couple of people and then slipped back into a little drug haze and woke up married to somebody else.

PLAYBOY: And that was your second marriage?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, and it took me about a year and a half to get out of that, and then I went into another really bad relationship. I then went into what I thought had the potential of being a good relationship, but it didn't work out, and I met another guy and got married, and then I realized I had made a mistake and said, "I've made a mistake. I'm really sorry," and was in the process of getting out

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of that when I met Frank. So, you know, it's kind of normal, except that maybe I got married a few too many times. It's because I love a good party, but I have recently realized that I can actually just throw a party and not get married. I think I've learned that. Now I'm more interested in a caring, loving relationship, which is what I have now.

PLAYBOY: Are you more capable of having one now?

GOLDBERG: Yes. You start telling yourself the truth, you know. You start facing reality. Being in love with someone and being with someone is work, and it's daily, and it's not a Band-Aid.

PLAYBOY: Did relationships used to be Band-Aids?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes. I thought that they would make me feel better. I thought they would protect me.

PLAYBOY: Protect you from what?

GOLDBERG: The world. But now I know you're only better if you feel better inside. You have to do the repair work that's required.

PLAYBOY: Were drugs other Band-Aids?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Band-Aids that don't work. They were a way not to feel pain or mistakes.

PLAYBOY: What drugs did you do?

GOLDBERG: How much time do you have? I did everything.

PLAYBOY: Was it difficult for you to stop?

GOLDBERG: It was difficult until I figured out why I did them. You don't want to hurt, but the wound gets bigger and festers. So I stopped doing all drugs and I faced those wounds and felt the pain. It hurts, but it does heal.

PLAYBOY: What advice did you give your daughter when she got pregnant at 15?

GOLDBERG: I understood why she had done it, which was to have some identity other than being my child. At 15 you want your own identity.

PLAYBOY: Were you upset that she was having a baby that young?

GOLDBERG: Yes, but I would support her no matter what came along. I practice what I preach. You have to support your children. I wasn't going to turn her out or make her feel bad. She was scared. That let me know that our relationship was still good, even though it's inevitably in that mother-daughter tunnel. But she came to me first and she said, "Mommy?" And I said, "What?" She said, "I'm pregnant." I said, "Well, what do you want to do?" She said, "I want to have it." I said, "OK. You know it's a lot of work. It's not easy and there will be times when you're not going to want to be bothered." She said, "I'm ready." I said OK, knowing full well that this was a task for the family. Now her baby, born on my birthday, is seven—and fantastic.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you advise her to have an abortion—to wait to have a child?

GOLDBERG: You can't tell kids much these days. They're much older than we were. All we can do is try to create environments for those who choose to have their children. And there will be more of them if the extreme right gets its way. If they abolish or make it harder to have an abortion, there will be more children with babies. But if our kids have children, we have to help them through it. We've got to hunker down and make the best of it and not let them go by the wayside. We ought to be giving some of these young boys an education, too. Where are they all? If they are going to have children, they need to be prepared for the responsibility that comes with fathering. We need to start making the boys as accountable as the girls are. I think if there were more guidance and money in the programs that the Republicans want to cut, we'd find fewer babies in garbage cans. We'd find fewer parents snapping under pressure, and there would be a lot less child abuse.

PLAYBOY: As a former welfare mother, do you support the welfare bill?

GOLDBERG: I worry that there are too many children who are going to fall by the wayside. Listen, I know welfare. It is very degrading. And people don't go on welfare because they want to, despite what the Republicans say. I raised my child partially on welfare and know how much it can help, even if it is degrading. It gave me some breathing space and gave me a little bit of dignity. It needs to be fixed, but there must be a safety net. It was degrading, but not as degrading as going out and prostituting yourself. I mean, that's the bottom line.

PLAYBOY: Literally prostituting yourself?

GOLDBERG: Absolutely, because when you are trying to raise a child and you have no job or a chance of a job, there aren't many alternatives. In every system there are people who abuse welfare. But they are not the majority. And they are not all black. And they are not all without education.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about limits on welfare so people will be required to return to the workforce?

GOLDBERG: I'd be fine with it if there were jobs out there. Most people do not want to sit home. So sure, make people go back to work, but train them and offer them good jobs. Corporations, in exchange for tax breaks, should have to provide training and meaningful child care. Then we can talk. They want to stop abortion, yet they are against sex education? What fucking hypocrisy. Sex education is important. I was very distressed when Joycelyn Elders lost her job. Kids have to know. Would you rather have people masturbate or have abortions? It's the safest sex you can have. Mutual masturbation is the safest sex you can have with somebody else. Oral sex is out. Penetration is out. You've got to be careful. You can get pregnant. You can get sick. So why not teach children about masturbation? They're going to do it anyway.

PLAYBOY: You have raised these issues at the Academy Awards ceremonies. How much free rein do you have?

GOLDBERG: Quite a bit, as you may have noticed.

PLAYBOY: Why did you decline to return for this year's show?

GOLDBERG: I just know that I can't be any better than I was. I learned from the first time, and I don't think I can surpass the second time. There's a lot of pressure.

PLAYBOY: Last year you took on Jesse Jackson, who called for a protest against the program because so few black actors were nominated for awards.

GOLDBERG: Don't get me started.

PLAYBOY: Get started.

GOLDBERG: We've all known and been working with and struggling with the problems Hollywood has with black actors. We knew it much better than he did. Yet I was hosting the awards, Quincy Jones was producing them, black acts such as Stomp were on, so it was the wrong place to complain. Besides, Jackson never asked what we—black actors—thought. But because he said he was boycotting the show, all I said was, "Since you aren't watching, I ain't going to deal with you." This created a big old stink, too. Ooh, people were so pissed off.

PLAYBOY: When Jackson called for the protest, did you and Jones sit down and discuss what your reaction would be?

GOLDBERG: I was ready to rip him a new behind. But Quincy said that he didn't want me to do anything.

PLAYBOY: We take it that you couldn't help yourself.

GOLDBERG: *[A particularly sweet, innocent smile]* That's right. Listen, Quincy has been fighting this battle for 45, 50 years. Harry

Belafonte has been fighting it for 60 years. Sidney Poitier for years and years. So I just had to quietly deal with it. A lot of people were very angry. They thought I insulted Jackson.

PLAYBOY: And marginalized him.

GOLDBERG: Marginalized him? He basically put me and Quincy in the position of choosing to do this thing we wanted to do and felt was a very positive thing to do, or to stand up alongside him. He put us in the position of looking like we were kissing somebody's ass.

PLAYBOY: Do you agree that black actors were underrepresented in terms of the nominations?

GOLDBERG: Maybe, but not in terms of that show. I mean, it was the wrong show to point to and say that blacks are being blocked from participating in Hollywood. People seem to forget that the mere fact that I'm still here is a huge statement. So is the fact that a lot more people look like me than they did 12 years ago, when I started—I mean, this hair! And I never have to be anybody except who I am. In a previous generation, a black actor might have had to fit a mold. But this is me. These are my lips, my nose, my hair, my butt—spread, un-spread, spread, unspread, depending on the season. I have to hold my temper.

PLAYBOY: Is Hollywood still racist? Does it downplay the work of blacks?

GOLDBERG: No. Because if you look at the past five years of the Academy Awards, one or two of us have always been nominated. I have been nominated—what? Twice? And won once. But are things perfect? Hell, no. It ain't perfect in the world.

PLAYBOY: Have you talked with Jackson since then?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes, yes. He said [*imitating him*] m'Well, you know, we've got to get together." I ain't heard from him since. Yeah, that's Jesse. He's basically full of shit.

PLAYBOY: A character in your Broadway show was a black girl who wanted blonde hair because everyone on TV was blonde. Did you feel that way when you were little?

GOLDBERG: I guess I did. When I was growing up, you looked at the back of a magazine and saw the Breck girl. And you just knew it wasn't going to happen. You'd take the magazine to your mother and she would just say, g'Ain't going to happen."

PLAYBOY: Is it fundamentally different for a black girl growing up now?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah. I mean, this is very egotistical of me, but look at me: I'm here. I'm here and I'm here in a big way. In little kids' books, in magazines, in movies, on television, on the Academy Awards ceremony, on Star Trek, in reruns forever, God bless them. I am a presence. There was no one until I became a teenager, and then Diahann Carroll came on in a big way with the TV program *Julia*. Now there are shows with entirely black casts and commercials with black actors.

PLAYBOY: For similar reasons, gays complain that they are portrayed as homicidal maniacs or stereotypical queens. Are you sympathetic?

GOLDBERG: Of course. America has been in the closet for a long

time. We are behind in our thinking in so many ways. Sexual revolution or no sexual revolution, the bottom line is that we are still very uncomfortable when it comes to sex. Anything we don't understand, we want to eliminate. But I think people have to recognize that there is nothing you can do to stop people from living their lives. Either adapt or walk away. Move to another place where people will continue to be intolerant. Move to Iran.

PLAYBOY: That's basically what you said to white supremacist Tom Metzger when he appeared on your talk show.

GOLDBERG: That's it. He said that the races should be separate and I said, g"Where are you going, Tom? Because I'm not going anywhere." This is why the immigration issue is making me insane. Immigration is the backbone of this country. Immigrants built America. I look at the last names of a lot of the people who are speaking about the terrible problem with immigration and think, How long ago were you an immigrant?

PLAYBOY: What were the high points of your talk-show experience? **GOLDBERG:** Getting to sit down with some wild people—Alexander Haig and asking him, g"Where should I call you? Should

I call you 'General'?" "Call me Big Al." Gordon Liddy—talking to him was a hoot! Whatever he is, he's a great conversationalist. We disagree on just about everything. Same with Charlton Heston, but talking to him was a thrill.

PLAYBOY: Didn't he give you a big kiss?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. I asked him if there had been an uproar when he did. The Omega Man and had this great interracial kiss with Rosa and Cash. It was one of the first big, swooping smackaroonies that we saw. He said, m"No." Then he leaned closer to me and said, "Are people really upset by that in this day and age?" And I said, "Oh, yeah! I've had them cut out of movies." And he leaned closer and said, "Really?" And I said, "Yeah," and he leaned closer and gave me a big old kiss! And there were other

good moments too. I have a tattoo of Woodstock on my breast, and Charles Schulz asked if I wanted him to sign it. It was wonderful. When Tom Metzger was on, he asked for my autograph for his kids.

PLAYBOY: In that case you were criticized for being too nice.

GOLDBERG: My job on that show was to listen. I never said I was going to fight for causes. I knew how I felt, and I thought I was very clear about it. People were angry because they wanted me to voice their opinion. But one of the reasons they yanked the show is that I wouldn't get into fights, wouldn't do a monolog and wouldn't put in a band. The show was about conversation.

PLAYBOY: Would you have had Newt Gingrich on your show?

GOLDBERG: I would have enjoyed the opportunity to talk with Newt Gingrich. I have always said it is hard to take someone named Newt seriously, but this is coming from someone named Whoopi Gingrich, with his loose-lipped contract, is a small-minded man. Yeah, it would be great if taxes could be cut. I would be so happy if welfare could be eliminated. I would be thrilled, you know, if big business really embraced the country. I would be thrilled if we didn't

"You can get pregnant. You can get sick. So why not teach children about masturbation?"

need affirmative action. But we do. At least Colin Powell acknowledged the need for affirmative action.

PLAYBOY: Do you admire him as a black leader?

GOLDBERG: He is for a woman's right to choose and for affirmative action—the latter because he knows it works. He backed the wrong horse, though. Clinton really does believe in affirmative action. I wouldn't be here, and neither would any other person of color. Before, it just wasn't working. We have had to take sterner actions to ensure that all Americans get their due. American, not African American. I won't let anyone call me African American.

PLAYBOY: Why not?

GOLDBERG: Because I'm not an African American. I'm purebred, New York-raised, I'm not from Africa. Calling me an African American divides us further. It means that I'm not entitled to everything an American is entitled to. My roots go back longer here than a lot of those folks who have nothing in front of g"American." Some of those folks came on the Mayflower, but we were under the Mayflower. We were here, I am just very, very insulted by what that does. I don't have to excuse the fact that I am brown-skinned or black-skinned. I don't have to explain that. I was born here. I am as American as a hot dog. As baseball. [Laughs] I can feel the teeth in my ass right now as we're talking [laughs]—just feel it. Chomp. Chomp. Chomp.

PLAYBOY: Who's chomping?

GOLDBERG: The people who feel they have the divine right of kings to speak for me and every other black person. Fuck g'em.

PLAYBOY: You take on social issues in your annual Comic Relief benefits. After 10 years, how has the experience changed?

GOLDBERG: It's more fun than ever. It's a reunion.

PLAYBOY: Is it occasionally difficult to hold your own in the company of Robin Williams and Billy Crystal?

GOLDBERG: The boys have sort of nurtured me along, and now I've finally come into my own with them. They're a tough duo. They are so fast. It took me until three or four years ago to just bust in. They were always really good to me, encouraging me, going, Pow! you're on. I always considered myself the Vanna White of Comic Relief, because I do all the serious stuff—the information, the phone numbers, I finally busted loose with them. Now we run wild. These boys are always talking about their genitalia, and I finally said, g"Look. Explain this to me. What is it about your dick? Why are we talking about it, yet again?"

PLAYBOY: You're also on TV commercials now. Did you have qualms about becoming the MCI spokesperson?

GOLDBERG: No, because MCI really does a better job.

PLAYBOY: You sound like a paid flack.

GOLDBERG: They asked me if I wanted to be their spokesperson, and I made them jump through hoops. I said, g"I want to see your paperwork. I want you to prove to me that you are the better company." They did. I believe they are cheaper and their service is better. Having me as their

spokesperson actually helped MCI, which I'm kind of proud of. It's why I will speak out for the things I believe in. People seem to listen a little bit. And I do want things to get better.

PLAYBOY: Have they?

GOLDBERG: Well, things got better and then they got worse. As far as I'm concerned, the Reagan years did more to destroy the fabric of the nation than anything. Dismantling a lot of those programs with no safety net destroyed the morale of folks who were working so hard and struggling so long to make something happen. My daughter would come in from the park and I'd say, g"Well, you're home early," and she'd say, "Yeah, some guy was driving by and shots were flying." I would be in conniptions because I grew up in a time when shooting went on only in the movies. This idea that life doesn't mean anything anymore comes from the top. Treat people as if they matter, care for them, tend them, help them grow up strong, give them good schools, child care, make them feel as if you care about them and show them that they are valued. Then they will be valued and will feel valued. The government has to get in there and roll up its sleeves





CAPTURING
HEARTS

**Sam
Stubbs**

Model @sams

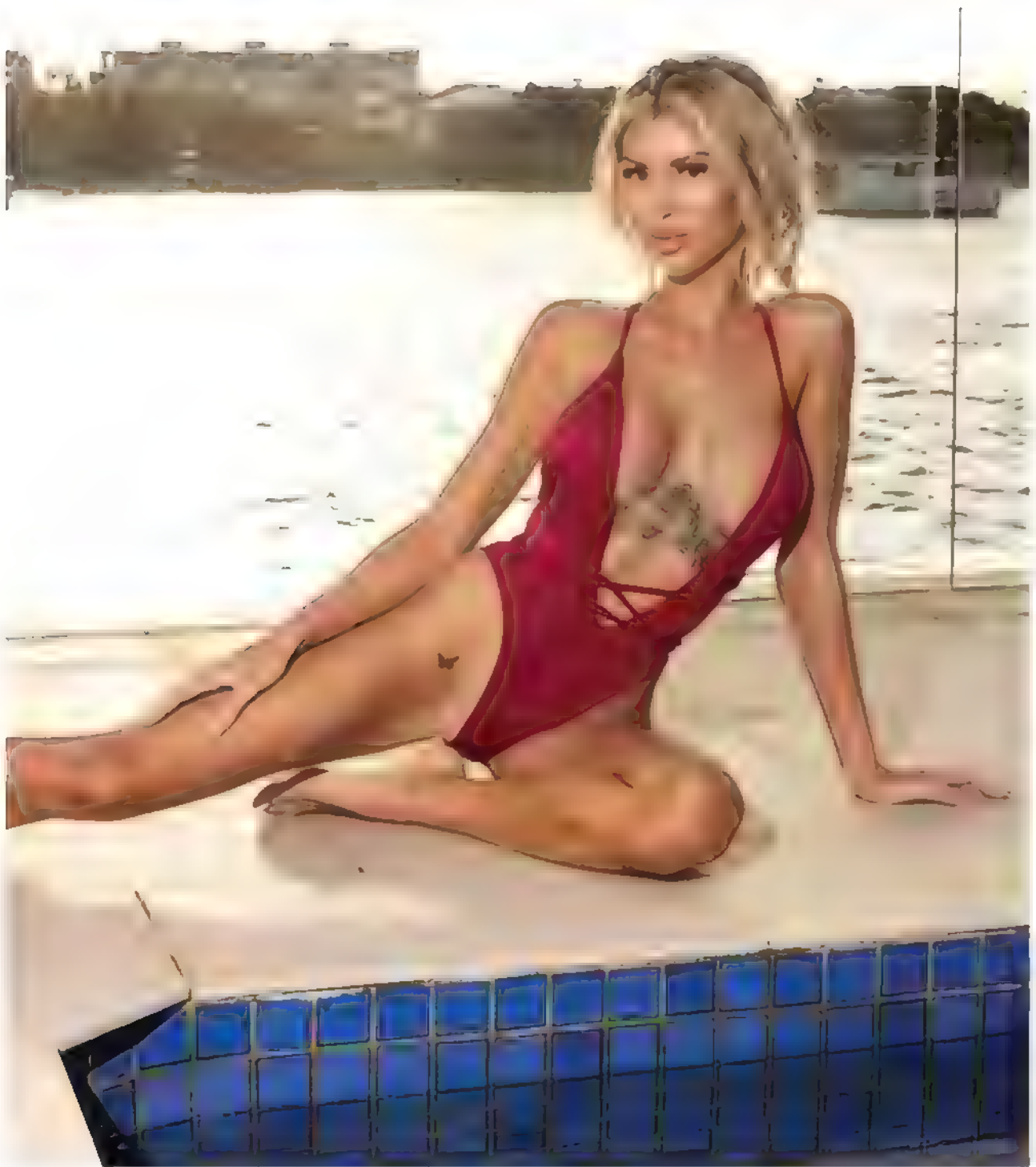
Photography by **Rocky Batchelor** | @rockybatchelor













What was your reaction when you found out you'd be featured? Honestly, I was shocked in the best way. I'm still so new to this world, so to be featured, especially by Playboy, felt surreal. I had a little moment to myself where I just smiled and thought, 'is this really happening?' It's the kind of thing you dream about, but when it actually happens, it hits different. I'm incredibly grateful and still pinching myself.

How did you prepare for the shoot? I prepped the only way a girl should for a Playboy shoot, candles lit, skincare on point, and my favourite playlist on. I may have done a few slow walks past the mirror in lingerie just to set the mood. By the time I got to the set, I was totally in the mood to play.

What does this magazine feature mean to you and your career? It means a lot, not just for my career, but for me personally. Being featured in Playboy is iconic. As someone new to modelling, it feels like a massive confidence boost. It's a beautiful reminder that I'm on the right path, even if I'm learning as I go. This shoot isn't just a moment, it's a message. 'You belong here.' And that's incredibly empowering.

Can you share any memorable moments from the shoot? There was this one moment where the light hit just right, and the photographer paused and said, 'Don't move.' We all felt it, like something clicked. It wasn't posed, it wasn't planned, just pure energy. And honestly, there was a lot of laughter between takes. I'm still finding my rhythm in front of the camera, so when the team is cheering you on and hyping you up, those are the moments that really stick with you.

What's your favourite look or outfit from the photoshoot? Honestly, I loved every look, from bikinis to lingerie to those simple pieces that just made me feel powerful and feminine. Each outfit let me play with a different side of myself, and I felt sexy and unstoppable. That's my favourite vibe to bring to every shoot.

Do you have any hidden talents, if so, what is it? One of my hidden talents is pole dancing. I take lessons from time to time, and it's such a fun way to combine strength, grace, and a little bit of daring playfulness. It challenges me physically, but also lets me tap into that bold, sensual part of myself. One of my hidden talents is cooking. I love whipping up dishes that surprise and delight, with just the right touch of spice. There's something

irresistible about turning simple ingredients into something delicious, but I guess you'll have to try for yourself to really find out.

Who has been your biggest influence? Honestly, it's all the women who own their sensuality and confidence - unapologetically. Whether it's a timeless icon or a woman who walks into a room and quietly sets it on fire, I'm inspired by that energy. The kind of woman who makes you pause and think "Damn, who is she?"

How would you describe your personal style? My personal style is a blend of

elegance and ease, with just enough edge to keep it interesting. I love soft fabrics, clean lines, and pieces that move with me. I'm drawn to timeless looks with little surprises. It's all about feeling good in what I'm wearing and letting my personality shine through.

What advice would you give to your younger self? Stop doubting yourself. You don't need to have it all figured out - just trust your gut and take the leap, even if it feels scary. You're more powerful than you think. And the parts of you that make you different are actually your strengths. Take up space. You belong in every room you enter.



Do you have any upcoming projects or collaborations you're excited about?

Absolutely! I'm still carving my path, but there are some exciting projects on the horizon that I can't wait to share soon. I'm working on collaborations that really align with my vibe, elegant, bold, and a little playful, and I'm excited to show more sides of myself to the world. Stay tuned, this is just the beginning.

What's your favourite way to unwind?

A long warm bath is my go-to, then slipping into some cute lingerie or silk pajamas that make me also love being outdoors, so a walk on the beach or watching the sunset

really helps me reset. It's the perfect mix of playful and relaxed.

What's your favourite body part of you?

Everything about my body and my sun-kissed tan just adds to that glow. People always tell me I have an exotic look, which I love because it sets me apart and makes me unforgettable. I own my sensuality fully; it's all part of the irresistible energy I bring, and I'm proud of that.

How do you see your career evolving in the future?

I see my career growing through unforgettable shoots here in Australia, where I'm based, and I'd love the chance to take my modelling

internationally as well. I'm drawn to working with luxury brands and shooting in stunning, inspiring locations. Modelling lets me express all sides of myself, elegant, playful, and powerful, and I'm excited for every opportunity that lets me embody that energy in new and exciting ways.

Thanks so much for your time. Where can our readers follow you on social to stay updated on what you're up to?

Thank you so much! I'd love for readers to follow along. You can find me on Instagram at @sams_xox, where I share behind-the-scenes moments, new projects, and a bit of my daily life. I'm excited to connect with everyone and take you along for the ride.











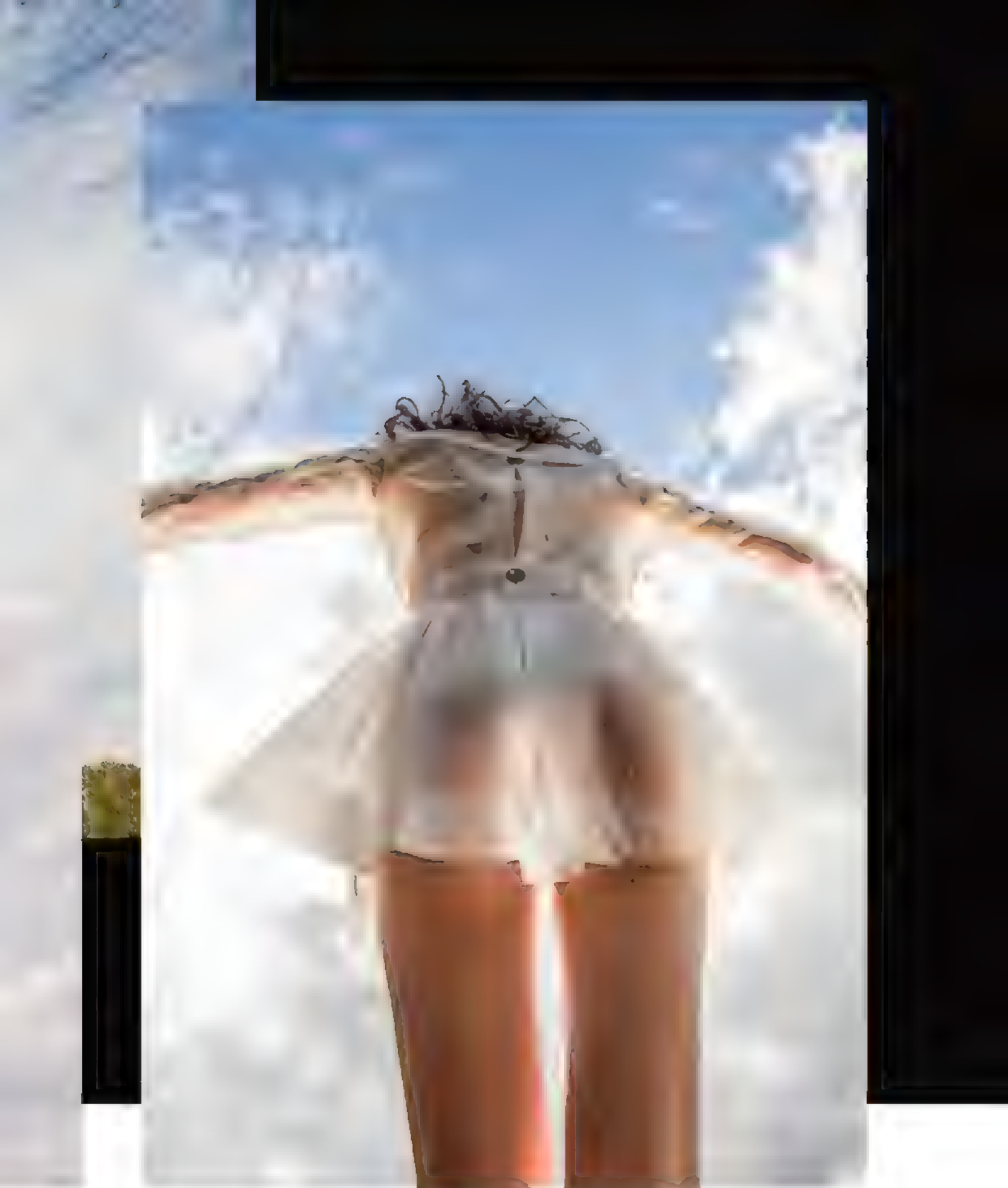
Free **FORM**

A Pictorial by Blaise Cepis

The open sky and the female form—a soaring study
featuring Maggie White, Jorlenne Caraballo, Ndeye
Magne Ndiaye and Priscilla Bass

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
BLAISE CEPIS





















POWER IN
PRESENCE

Cristal

Photography by Mike Cohen | @Mikecohenphotos

Instagram @cristalplayboy_official





Hi Cristal, such an absolute honor to have you on Playboy.

Tell us about the moment you found out you would be featured in the magazine. What was your initial reaction?

Thank you for the invitation and this amazing experience. It's a real honor to be on the cover of Playboy New Zealand again. This is a very special invitation for me because my history with Playboy magazine began in New Zealand. That's where it all began. It's a real gift from God and a blessing. I thank all my fans because thanks to you I'm here. I never dreamt that one day I would be in Playboy, it's a blessing. It's like a fairy tale, how an ordinary girl from a small town in Poland, who had to overcome many hardships throughout her life, ends up on the cover of Playboy. My biggest dream has come true. The Playboy invitation has helped me believe in myself even more. It has given me a lot of hope and belief that everything is possible and the world is waiting for me. An unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you. The most beautiful things in my life always happen by accident. I remember the feeling of excitement when I received an invitation to the first Playboy. An unforgettable feeling, then came the next invitations from Playboy, and now I can reveal that there will be more in the future and other magazines, interviews, my guest appearances in artists' video clips. All this helped me believe in myself, in the fight against complexes, but above all, interacting and working with all these wonderful people: photographers, models, musicians created me as an artist and I decided to start my own perfume brand which is created entirely by me and the scents are inspired by my memories from traveling to my magical places and my cosmetic brand to leave some kind of legacy and be able to fulfill my dreams about a foundation supporting young talents and people with autism.

Which three words describe you the best? I think is more than three lol, loyal, respectful, honest, patient, optimistic, trustworthy, solid, goodhearted.

What's a childhood dream you've held on to? As a child, I dreamed of building wells and water infrastructure in Africa in the future to provide people living there with access to drinking

water. It was my childhood dream to have an organization that helps people. I wanted to build schools and hospitals, to give something back, to help others live better in civilized conditions, to have enough food, medicine, and water.

What's a must-have item in your wardrobe right now? Honestly, my perfume. Wait, let me show you lol. I love it. JustFetish by Joanne, the world has gone crazy for it; everyone wants it, especially after several publications in world-famous magazines.

If you could be any animal, what would you be and why? Maybe a beautiful butterfly so I could fly as well, maybe in my next life (because I believe in reincarnation). I was a butterfly because I'm multiented and my soul and generally life is so colorful like a butterfly. I even often have dreams in which I fly, and these dreams are so real, and how well I know the skills and memories from the past.

How do you define true success, and do you feel like you're living it? I think that the measure of success is the re





alization of your own dreams. I think that I have achieved some kind of success in my life, something that I can be proud of with my hard work, perseverance of character, but it is only thanks to you, my readers, and your support. I love you and I am always mentally with you.

What's the boldest decision you've ever made that changed your life? Without a doubt, it was leaving my homeland, which is Poland. It was the most difficult experience that shaped me into who I am today.

What's one thing you've always wanted to do but haven't dared to try yet? Definitely a parachute jump and a balloon flight.

A lot of young women look up to you. What advice would you give them on pursuing their own dreams? One of the most important lessons I have learned in my life is: be true to myself. This means not just in my personal life, but at work, too. Quite a few people have challenged me over the years, saying that you can't run a business based on personal values. But I completely disagree.

You need to identify the opportunity, act on it, and not give up until you have a solution. Try not to change under pressure from others, be yourself, be authentic and natural. My basic values are respect and loyalty. I treat others the way I would like to be treated. In my career I've had lots of moments when I feel I've achieved something and also lots of other moments when something has gone wrong. I've learned that it helps to use neither to define who you can be or what you can achieve. There are days when you won't put in much effort, and everything good will fall in your lap. There are other days when you will try your hardest and nothing will go right. That's just its life, but what's important is to always remember. Failure is a natural part of learning and an opportunity to grow. As I mentioned earlier. Even if stones land on your face every day, be strong and fight adversity, and think positively. I am the best example that the impossible is possible. In moments of failure, don't waste time analyzing your mistakes. They are your lesson for a better future. I want to go down in history as an icon of style and class. People with a great appetite for life, I think that I am already becoming an inspiration for people, that it is worth believing in dreams, because you just have to believe in yourself and start fulfilling them. I believe that the recipe for success is hard work and determination. I am an example that the concept of impossible does not exist, starting from the covers of Playboy to the covers of the most prestigious magazines. Additionally, I have developed my cosmetic brand focusing on perfume design, which was immediately picked up by the leading magazines on the market, making my perfume brand "JustFetish by Joanne" recognizable on the market. Currently, I have already appeared on several covers of magazines with bottles of my perfumes, and I already have more invitations to the next ones, as well as invitations to participate in perfume shows in the USA and Europe.

Is there a dream brand or platform you'd love to work with? For years, I have had a great fondness for the Louis Vuitton brand; it is an icon of style for me. Just as my grandmother was once for me. She infected me with love for this brand, it is the story of my grandmother's youth interwoven with war memories of her emigration and return to Poland with all her belongings locked in a Louis Vuitton trunk, which we found together in a dark corner of the basement as children. It has always been with me, later as a coffee table and a designer piece of equipment. I still have it today. The same story also applies to my perfumes, these are the scents of childhood, one of them I will recreate my grandmother's favorite scent. The essence of omnipotence is locked in a retro bottle. It was my grandmother who told me that if I work hard, one day I will buy myself a Louis Vuitton bag. For years, I have been a loyal collector of accessories of this brand, an ambassador and guest invited to special Louis Vuitton shows, I pose for photos with accessories of this brand, and I even appeared on the cover of

Playboy. I am currently focusing on my perfume brand "JustFetish by Joanne." In the future, I intend to continue designing home decoration accessories and interior design, which I have done before when decorating my hotels.

What are your future goals? I dream of a happy family and achieving my goals. I want to establish a Foundation for children with Touret's syndrome. It's a cause close to my heart for certain reasons. My greatest dream is to complete a biography about my life. It was not a bed of roses with many tears and sacrifices. It will include my memories and motivate people to never give up and have faith that the sun always comes after the storm.

What is the most valuable lesson you've learned in your career as a model? One of the most important lessons I have learned in my life is: be true to myself. This means not just in my personal life, but at work, too. Quite a few people have challenged me over the years, saying that you can't run a business based on personal values. But I completely disagree. You need to identify the opportunity, act on it, and not give up until you have a solution. Try not to change under pressure from others, be yourself, be authentic and natural. My basic values are respect and loyalty. I treat others the way I would like to be treated.

What's the most valuable lesson you've learned in your career? In my career, I've had lots of moments when I feel I've achieved something and also lots of other moments when something has gone wrong. I've learned that it helps to use neither to define who you can be or what you can achieve. There are days when you won't put in much effort, and everything good will fall in your lap. There are other days when you will try your hardest and nothing will go right. That's just life. But it's important to always remember that Failure is a natural part of learning and an opportunity to grow. As I mentioned earlier. Even if stones land on your face every day, be strong and fight adversity, and think positively. I am the best example that the impossible is possible. In moments of failure, don't waste time analyzing your mistakes. They are your lesson for a better future.

Who is your celebrity crush? I am a big fan of Lady Gaga because she is a multi-talented person as a singer and actress.



dancer, but she also has a very interesting character, and her vision of looking at the world motivates and inspires. From the world of FHM, Playboy, and this industry is definitely Pamela Anderson but also Anna Nicole Smith, many people tell me that I am supposedly similar to her haha. I recommend watching documentaries about their lives on Netflix. They are very inspiring.

What is the absolute worst thing a man can do to completely put you off? The worst thing you can do to offend me is to treat anyone without respect. If you only respect the wealthy, it's unsavoury and unacceptable to me. Men who decorate themselves in expensive methods think it's valuable, but in fact, they are selfish, false and disloyal and disrespectful to women. Wealth comes from within; it cannot be bought with any amount of money. To win my heart, be a caring, good-natured, loyal individual. You will love me for who I am, my character, not what I have or don't have as a benefit for you. I only like well-mannered gentleman who treats me like a lady, be old-fashioned with good manners. Thank you.

What has been your favorite project or collaboration to date? For sure, Playboy/ it all started it as it opened the door to international fame, participation in many photo shoots, interviews for travel magazines meeting wonderful people founding a cosmetics brand. Playboy gave me wings. It's an unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you for this wonderful

gift from God. I never dreamt that one day I would be in Playboy; it's a blessing. It's like a fairy tale, how an ordinary girl from a small town in Poland, who had to overcome many hardships throughout her life, ends up on the cover of Playboy. My biggest dream has come true. The Playboy invitation has helped me believe in myself even more. It has given me a lot of hope and belief that everything is possible and the world is waiting for me. An unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you.

What does a typical day in your life look like? When I wake up, I squeeze fresh orange juice, I look through my mail, I go to the park with my dog. Then, when I come back, I make my favorite coconut latte macchiato, tabouleh salad, definitely with pomegranate seeds and fresh mint. I put on my favorite music, and that's my time for meditation. Then some yoga exercises - a few deep breaths and I'm ready for the whole day. My daily routine have photo shoots for magazines, interviews, make-up, hairdresser, beautician. I go to the factory where we create perfume scents in the laboratory. I'm just finishing work on my own line of make-up and candles, and air fresheners for the home. Every day of mine is intense, but I love it. When I have a lot of things to do, I feel alive.

How do you stay motivated and focused in a fast-paced industry? From my experience, if you are very busy, you don't focus on details but on organizational issues, and



people, not the other way around.

Which piece of clothing makes you feel confident and empowered when wearing it? I think that an elegant classic suit with my long red nails and red lipstick I know what impression it makes on people lol Generally, I wouldn't focus so much on the elements of clothing here, but my red nails, the color, length, and shape of which are the same, unchanging over the years, are the key element of clothing that people often pay attention to. They are my characteristic distinguishing mark, hence I can even be in a track-

suit for a walk in the park, and everyone always compliments my manicure, very often even women. I feel well-groomed and dressed when I have a perfect manicure

What's your favorite guilty-pleasure snack or meal? Mmm., frozen yogurt with fruit and pistachio sauce is divine. I go for long Nordic walks so I can eat what I want lol

How do you unwind and recharge after a busy day? I take an aromatic candlelight bath accompanied by my favorite classical music and Macha tea; it's a real ritual for body and soul

What message do you hope to convey through your work? As above before, by not judging people by their cover, to support and help each other, not to be jealous and selfish. Every day, try to be the best version of yourself and treat others how you would like to be treated. Be your natural self, don't try to change under the pressure of others. Even if stones land on your face every day, be strong and fight adversity, and think positively I am the best example that the impossible is possible. Stay strong and believe in yourself, and your dreams will come true Thank you for spending this time getting to know me. Always sending you love and best wishes

Crista xx

I think this is the key to success. You just have to remember about healthy eating, and the rest will take care of itself Because when I am very busy and have a tight schedule, I can find more free time than when I have a looser schedule, it turns me into a lazy person and then I don't have time for anything

What's your philosophy when it comes to balancing work and personal life? My philosophy on work-life balance is to prioritize intentionality and flexibility, meaning actively managing my time to dedicate quality moments to both my professional commitments and personal well-being, understanding that the balance may shift depending on life circumstances, while always striving to maintain a healthy separation between the two spheres to avoid burnout.

What's one thing you do every day to keep yourself grounded and happy? Staying grounded means being able to stay calm and connect with my core self in the face of uncertainty. Practicing physical wellness: Exercise daily, eat nutritious food, and prioritize quality sleep, spending time in nature, connecting with your senses, and listening to music that reminds you of something positive. All of these little things are rituals make you feel better, even in life, sometimes can be hard and can be like balm for body and spirit. Repeating positive statements: Say kind

statements to yourself, or repeat coping or safety statements.

What are some hobbies or passions you enjoy outside of work? I love helping others; this is the meaning of my life, especially for children with autism and Tourette's Thanks to hard work, I managed to create my own cosmetic brand I design my own perfume scents, and all this in order to establish a Foundation for children with Touret's syndrome. It's a cause close to my heart for certain reasons My greatest dream is to complete a biography about my life. It was not a bed of roses with many tears and sacrifices It will include my memories and motivate people to never give up and have faith that the sun always comes after the storm

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why? Modeling allows me to travel a lot, thanks to it, I have visited many interesting places, but there is still a lot to discover I think that the place is not really of great importance, but the people you are around they create a good atmosphere You can be on a paradise beach alone with no one to talk to and enjoy the views together and then you have the impression that it doesn't matter where but with whom You can be at home in front of the TV watching Netflix and have someone to cuddle up to - then you are in paradise. As I said earlier, places are created by



Martin Luther King Jr.:

A Testament of Hope

In his final published statement, the fallen civil rights leader points the way out of America's racial turmoil into the promised land of true equality

WRITTEN BY
ZOË LIGON





In January of 1969 PLAYBOY published a piece that would come to stand the test of time: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s essay *A Testament of Hope*, which King wrote prior to his murder in the spring of 1968. The urgent statement, wrote editors at the time, "implores white America to rectify the evils of racial inequality and economic segregation and points the way to m'the promised land' of equal justice." The text, which is accompanied by a now iconic illustration by Shelly Canton, has since become one of the world's most powerful writings on nonviolence, policy, Black nationalism and humanity itself.

In the piece, King asked readers to consider, p"Why is the issue of equality still so far from solution in America, a nation that professes itself to be democratic, inventive, hospitable to new ideas, rich, productive and awesomely powerful?"

Fifty-one years later, King's question remains unanswered. The revolutionary's vision for an equitable society continues to guide us forward as we grapple with police brutality, racism, violence and hatred in America, and in the world. There is simply no better time to revisit this landmark composition than now, when we are potentially at the precipice of meaningful change once again. May we continue to p"fight for human justice, brotherhood, secure peace and abundance for all," as Dr. King implored us to do.

Whenever I am asked my opinion of the current state of the civil rights movement, I am forced to pause; it is not easy to describe a crisis so profound that it has caused the most powerful nation in the world to stagger in confusion and bewilderment. Today's problems are so acute because the tragic evasions and defaults of several centuries have accumulated to disaster proportions. The luxury of a leisurely approach to urgent solutions—the ease of gradualism—was forfeited by ignoring the issues for too long. The nation waited until the black man was explosive with fury before stirring itself even to partial concern. Confronted now with the interrelated problems of war, inflation, urban decay, white backlash and a climate of violence, it is now forced to address itself to race relations and poverty, and it

is tragically unprepared. What might once have been a series of separate problems now merge into a social crisis of almost stupefying complexity.

I am not sad that black Americans are rebelling; this was not only inevitable but eminently desirable. Without this magnificent ferment among Negroes, the old evasions and procrastinations would have continued indefinitely. Black men have slammed the door shut on a past of deadening passivity. Except for the Reconstruction years, they have never in their long history on American soil struggled with such creativity and courage for their freedom. These are our bright years of emergence; though they are painful ones, they cannot be avoided.

Yet despite the widening of our stride, history is racing forward so rapidly that the Negro's inherited and imposed disadvantages slow him down to an infuriating crawl. Lack of education, the dislocations of recent urbanization and the hardening of white resistance loom as such tormenting roadblocks that the goal sometimes appears not as a fixed point in the future but as a receding point never to be reached. Still, when doubts emerge, we can remember that only yesterday Negroes were not only grossly exploited but negated as human beings. They were invisible in their misery. But the sullen and silent slave of 110 years ago, an object of scorn at worst or of pity at best, is today's angry man. He is vibrantly on the move, he is forcing change, rather than waiting for it in pathetic futility. In less than two decades, he has roared out of slumber to change so many of his life's conditions that he may yet find the means to accelerate his march forward and overtake the racing locomotive of history.

These words may have an unexpectedly optimistic ring at a time when pessimism is the prevailing mood. People are often surprised to learn that I am an optimist. They know how often I have been jailed, how frequently the days and nights have been filled with frustration and sorrow, how bitter and dangerous are my adversaries. They expect these experiences to harden me into a grim and desperate man. They fail, however, to perceive the sense of affirmation generated by the challenge of embracing

NEGROES HAVE ALWAYS HELD THE HOPE THAT IF THEY REALLY DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY ARE GREAT SOLDIERS AND IF THEY REALLY FIGHT FOR AMERICA AND HELP SAVE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, THEN WHEN THEY COME BACK HOME, AMERICA WILL TREAT THEM BETTER. THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE.

struggle and surmounting obstacles. They have no comprehension of the strength that comes from faith in God and man. It is possible for me to falter, but I am profoundly secure in my knowledge that God loves us, he has not worked out a design for our failure. Man has the capacity to do right as well as wrong, and his history is a path upward, not downward. The past is strewn with the ruins of the empires of tyranny, and each is a monument not merely to man's blunders but to his capacity to overcome them. While it is a bitter fact that in America in 1968, I am denied equality solely because I am black, yet I am not a chattel slave. Millions of people have fought thousands of battles to enlarge my freedom, restricted as it still is, progress has been made. This is why I remain an optimist, though I am also a realist, about the barriers before us. Why is the issue of equality still so far from solution in America, a nation that professes itself to be democratic, inventive, hospitable to new ideas, rich, productive and awesomely powerful? The problem is so tenacious because, despite its virtues and attributes, America is deeply racist and its democracy is flawed both economically and socially. All too many Americans believe justice will unfold painlessly or that its absence for black people will be tolerated tranquilly.

Justice for black people will not flow into society merely from court decisions nor from fountains of political oratory. Nor will a few token changes quell all the tempestuous yearnings of millions of disadvantaged black people. White America must recognize that justice for black people cannot be achieved without radical changes in the structure of our society. The comfortable, the entrenched, the privileged cannot continue to tremble at the prospect of change in the status quo.

Stephen Vincent Benét had a message for both white and black Americans in the title of a story, *Freedom Is a Hard Bought Thing*. When millions of people have been cheated for centuries, restitution is a costly process. Inferior education, poor housing, unemployment, inadequate health care—each is a bitter component of the oppression that has been our heritage. Each will require billions of dollars to correct. Justice so long

deferred has accumulated interest and its cost for this society will be substantial in financial as well as human terms. This fact has not been fully grasped, because most of the gains of the past decade were obtained at bargain rates. The desegregation of public facilities cost nothing, neither did the election and appointment of a few black public officials.

The price of progress would have been high enough at the best of times, but we are in an agonizing national crisis because a complex of profound problems has intersected in an explosive mixture. The black surge toward freedom has raised justifiable demands for racial justice in our major cities at a time when all the problems of city life have simultaneously erupted. Schools, transportation, water supply, traffic and crime would have been municipal agonies whether or not Negroes lived in our cities. The anarchy of unplanned city growth was destined to confound our confidence. What is unique to this period is our inability to arrange an order of priorities that promises solutions that are decent and just.

Millions of Americans are coming to see that we are fighting an immoral war that costs nearly 30 billion dollars a year, that we are perpetuating racism, that we are tolerating almost 40 million poor during an overflowing material abundance. Yet they remain helpless to end the war, to feed the hungry, to make brotherhood a reality, thus has to shake our faith in ourselves. If we look honestly at the realities of our national life, it is clear that we are not marching forward; we are groping and stumbling, we are divided and confused. Our moral values and our spiritual confidence sink, even as our material wealth ascends. In these trying circumstances, the black revolution is much more than a struggle for the rights of Negroes. It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws—racism, poverty, militarism and materialism. It is exposing evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society. It reveals systemic rather than superficial flaws and suggests that radical reconstruction of society itself is the real issue to be faced.

It is time that we stopped our blithe lip service to the guarantees of life, liberty and

pursuit of happiness. These fine sentiments are embodied in the Declaration of Independence, but that document was always a declaration of intent rather than of reality. There were slaves when it was written, there were still slaves when it was adopted, and to this day, black Americans have not life, liberty nor the privilege of pursuing happiness, and millions of poor white Americans are in economic bondage that is scarcely less oppressive. Americans who genuinely treasure our national ideals, who know they are still elusive dreams for all too many, should welcome the stirring of Negro demands. They are shattering the complacency that allowed a multitude of social evils to accumulate. Negro agitation is requiring America to re-examine its comforting myths and may yet catalyze the drastic reforms that will save us from social catastrophe.

In indicting white America for its ingrained and tenacious racism, I am using the term "white" to describe the majority, not all who are white. We have found that there are many white people who clearly perceive the justice of the Negro struggle for human dignity. Many of them joined our struggle and displayed heroism no less inspiring than that of black people. More than a few died by our side; their memories are cherished and are undimmed by time.

Yet the largest part of white America is still poisoned by racism, which is as native to our soil as pine trees, sagebrush and buffalo grass. Equally native to us is the concept that gross exploitation of the Negro is acceptable, if not commendable. Many whites who concede that Negroes should

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Police must cease being occupation troops in the ghetto and start protecting its residents.”

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**An insistent question
defies evasion: Is
security for some be-
ing purchased at the
price of degradation
for others?”**

have equal access to public facilities and the untrammelled right to vote cannot understand that we do not intend to remain in the basement of the economic structure, they cannot understand why a porter or a housemaid would dare dream of a day when his work will be more useful, more remunerative and a pathway to rising opportunity. This incomprehension is a heavy burden in our efforts to win white allies for the long struggle.

But the American Negro has in his nature the spiritual and worldly fortitude to eventually win his struggle for justice and freedom. It is a moral fortitude that has been forged by centuries of oppression. In their sorrow and their hardship, Negroes have become almost instinctively cohesive. We band together readily; and against white hostility, we have an intense and wholesome loyalty to one another. But we cannot win our struggle for justice all alone, nor do I think that most Negroes want to exclude well-intentioned whites from participation in the black revolution. I believe there is an important place in our struggle for white liberals and I hope that their present estrangement from our movement is only temporary. But many white people in the past joined our movement with a kind of messianic faith that they were going to save the Negro and solve all of his problems very quickly. They tended, in some instances, to be rather aggressive and insensitive to the opinions and abilities of the black people with whom they were working; this has been especially true of students. In many cases, they simply did not know how to work in a supporting, secondary role. I think this problem became most evident when young men and women from elite Northern universities came down to Mississippi to work with the black students at Tougaloo and Rust colleges, who were not quite as articulate, didn't type quite as fast and were not as sophisticated. Inevitably, feeling of white paternalism and black inferiority became exaggerated. The Negroes who rebelled against white liberals were trying to assert their own equality and to cast off the mantle of paternalism.

Fortunately, we haven't had this problem in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Most of the white people who were working with us in 1962 and 1963 are still with us. We have always enjoyed a relationship of mutual respect. But I think a great many white liber-

als outside SCLC also have learned this basic lesson in human relations, thanks largely to Jimmy Baldwin and others who have articulated some of the problems of being black in a multiracial society. And I am happy to report that relationships between whites and Negroes in the human rights movement are now on a much healthier basis.

In society at large, abrasion between the races is far more evident—but the hostility was always there. Relations today are different only in the sense that Negroes are expressing the feelings that were so long muted. The constructive achievements of the decade 1955 to 1965 deceived us. Everyone underestimated the amount of violence and rage Negroes were suppressing and the vast amount of bigotry the white majority was disguising. All-black organizations are a reflection of that alienation—but they are only a contemporary way station on the road to freedom. They are a product of this period of identity crisis and directionless confusion. As the human rights movement becomes more confident and aggressive, more nonviolently active, many of these emotional and intellectual problems will be resolved in the heat of battle, and we will not ask what is our neighbor's color but whether he is a brother in the pursuit of racial justice. For much of the fervent idealism of the white liberals has been supplemented recently by a dispassionate recognition of some of the cold realities of the struggle for that justice.

One of the most basic of these realities was pointed out by the President's Riot Commission, which observed that the nature of the American economy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries made it possible for the European immigrants of that time to escape from poverty. It was an economy that had room for—even a great need for—unskilled manual labor. Jobs were available for willing workers, even those with the educational and language liabilities they had brought with them. But the American economy today is radically different. There are fewer and fewer jobs for the culturally and educationally deprived, thus does present-day poverty feed upon and perpetuate itself. The Negro today cannot escape from his ghetto in the way that Irish, Italian, Jewish and Polish immigrants escaped from their ghettos 50 years ago. New methods of escape must be found. And one of these roads to escape will be a more equitable sharing of political power between Negroes and whites. Integration is meaningless without the sharing of power. When I speak of integration, I don't mean a romantic mixing of colors, I mean a real sharing of power and responsibility. We will eventually achieve this, but it is going to be much more difficult for us than for any other minority. After all, no other minority has been so constantly, brutally and deliberately exploited. But because of this very exploitation, Negroes bring a special spiritual and moral contribution to American life—a contribution without which America could not survive.

The implications of true racial integration are more than just national in scope. I don't believe we can have world peace until America has an "integrated" foreign policy. Our disastrous experiences in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic have been, in one sense, a result of racist deci-



sion making. Men of the white west, whether or not they like it, have grown up in a racist culture, and their thinking is colored by that fact. They have been fed on a false mythology and tradition that blinds them to the aspirations and talents of other men. They don't really respect anyone who is not white. But we simply cannot have peace in the world without mutual respect. I honestly feel that a man without racial blinders—or, even better, a man with personal experience of racial discrimination—would be in a much better position to make policy decisions and to conduct negotiations with the underprivileged and emerging nations of the world (or even with Castro, for that matter) than would an Eisenhower or a Dulles.

The American Marines might not even have been needed in Santo Domingo, had the American ambassador there been a man who was sensitive to the color dynamics that pervade the national life of the Dominican Republic. Black men in positions of power in the business world would not be so unconscionable as to trade or traffic with the Union of South Africa, nor would they be so insensitive to the problems and needs of Latin America that they would continue the patterns of American exploitation that now prevail there. When we replace the rabidly segregationist chairman of the Armed Services Committee with a man of good will, when our ambassadors reflect a creative and wholesome interracial background, rather than a cultural heritage that is a conglomeration of Texas and Georgia politics, then we will be able to bring about a qualitative difference in the nature of American foreign policy. This is what we mean when we talk about redeeming the soul of America. Let me make it clear that I don't think white men have a monopoly on sin or greed. But I think there has been a kind of collective experience—a kind of shared misery in the black community—that makes it a little harder for us to exploit other people.

I have come to hope that American Negroes can be a bridge between white civilization and the nonwhite nations of the world, because we have roots in both. Spiritually, Negroes identify understandably with Africa, an identification that is rooted largely in our color; but all of us are a part of the white-American world too. Our education has been Western and our language, our attitudes—though we sometimes tend to deny it—are very much influenced by Western civilization. Even our emotional life has been disciplined and sometimes stifled and inhibited by an essentially European upbringing. So, although in one sense we are neither, in another sense we are both Americans and Africans. Our very bloodlines are a mixture. I hope and feel that out of the universality of our experience, we can help make peace and harmony in this world more possible.

Although American Negroes could, if they were in decision-making positions, give aid and encouragement to the underprivileged and disenfranchised people in other lands, I don't think it can work the other way around. I don't think the nonwhites in other parts of the world can really be of any concrete help to us, given their own problems of development and self-determination. In fact, American Negroes have greater collective buying power than Canada, greater than all four of the Scandinavian countries combined. American Negroes have greater economic potential than most of the nations—perhaps even more than all of the nations—of Africa. We don't need to look for help from some power outside the boundaries of our country, except in the sense of sympathy and identification. Our challenge, rather, is to organize the power we already have in our midst. The Newark riots, for example, could certainly have been prevented by a more aggressive political involvement on the part of that city's Negroes. There is utterly no reason Addonizio should be the mayor of Newark, with the Negro majority that exists in that city. Gary, Indiana, is another tinderbox city; but its black mayor, Richard Hatcher, has given Negroes a new faith in the effectiveness of the political process.

One of the most basic weapons in the fight for social justice will be the cumulative political power of the Negro. I can foresee the Negro vote becoming consistently the decisive vote in national elections. It is already decisive in states that have large numbers of electoral votes. Even today, the Negroes in New York City strongly influence how New York State will go in national elections, and the Negroes of Chicago have a similar leverage in Illinois. Negroes are even the decisive balance of power in the elections in Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia. So the party and the candidate that get the support of the Negro voter in national elections have a very definite edge, and we intend to use this fact to win advances in the struggle for human rights. I have every confidence that the black vote will ultimately help unseat the diehard opponents of equal rights in Congress—who are, incidentally, reactionary on all issues. But the Negro community cannot win this victory alone, indeed, it would be an empty victory even if the Negroes could win it alone. Intelligent men of good will everywhere must see this as their task and contribute to its support.

The election of Negro mayors, such as Hatcher, in some of the nation's larger cities has also had a tremendous psychological impact upon the Negro. It has shown him that he has the potential to participate in the determination of his own destiny—and that of society. We will see more Negro mayors in major cities in the next 10 years, but this is not the ultimate answer. Mayors are relatively impotent figures in the scheme of national politics. Even a white mayor such as John Lindsay of New York simply does not have the money and resources to deal with the problems of his city. The necessary money to deal with urban problems must come from the federal government, and this money is ultimately controlled by the Congress of the United States. The success of these enlightened mayors is entirely dependent upon the financial support made available by Washington.

The past record of the federal government, however, has not been encouraging. No president has really done very much for the American Negro, though the past two presidents have received much undeserved credit for helping us. This credit has accrued to Lyndon Johnson and John Kennedy only because it was during their administrations that Negroes began doing more for themselves. Kennedy didn't voluntarily submit a civil rights bill, nor did Lyndon Johnson. In fact, both told us at one time that such legislation was impossible. President Johnson did

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Millions of black protesting voices have become a sound of distant thunder increasing in volume with the gathering of storm clouds.”

respond realistically to the signs of the times and used his skills as a legislator to get bills through Congress that other men might not have gotten through. I must point out, in all honesty, however, that President Johnson has not been nearly so diligent in implementing the bills he has helped shepherd through Congress.

Of the 10 titles of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, probably only the one concerning public accommodations—the most bitterly contested section—has been meaningfully enforced and implemented. Most of the other sections have been deliberately ignored. The same is true of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which provides for federal referees to monitor the registration of voters in counties where Negroes have systematically been denied the right to vote. Yet of the some 900 counties that are eligible for federal referees, only 58 counties to date have had them. The 842 other counties remain essentially just as they were before the march on Selma. Look at the pattern of federal referees in Mississippi, for example. They are dispersed in a manner that gives the appearance of change without any real prospect of actually shifting political power or giving Negroes a genuine opportunity to be represented in the government of their state. There is a similar pattern in Alabama, even though that state is currently at odds with the Democratic administration in Washington because of George Wallace. Georgia, until just recently, had no federal referees at all, not even in the hard-core black-belt counties. I think it is significant that there are no federal referees at all in the home districts of the most powerful Southern senators—particularly Senators Russell, Eastland and Talmadge. The power and moral corruption of these senators remain unchallenged, despite the weapon for change the legislation promised to be. Reform was thwarted when the legislation was inadequately enforced.

But not all is bad in the South, by any means. Though the fruits of our struggle have sometimes been nothing more than bitter despair, I must admit there have been some hopeful signs, some meaningful successes. One of the most hopeful of these changes is the attitude of the Southern Negro himself. Benign acceptance of second-class citizenship has been displaced by vigorous demands for full citizenship rights and opportunities. In fact, most of our concrete accomplishments have been limited largely to the South. We have put an end to racial segregation in the South, we have brought about the beginnings of reform in the political system; and, as incongruous as it may seem, a Negro is probably safer in most Southern cities than he is in the cities of the North. We have confronted the racist policemen of the South and demanded reforms in the police departments. We have confronted the Southern racist power structure and we have elected Negro and liberal white candidates through much of the South in the past 10 years. George Wallace is certainly an exception, and Lester Maddox is a sociological fossil. But despite these anachronisms, at the city and county level, there is a new respect for black votes and black citizenship that just did not exist 10 years ago. Though school integration has moved at a depressingly slow rate in the South, it has moved. Of far more significance is the fact that we have learned that the integration of schools does not necessarily solve the inadequacy of schools. White schools are often just about as bad as black schools, and integrated schools sometimes tend to merge the problems of the two without solving either of them.

There is progress in the South, however—progress expressed by the presence of Negroes in the Georgia House of Representatives, in the election of a Negro to the Mississippi House of Representatives, in the election of a black sheriff in Tuskegee, Alabama, and, most especially, in the integration of police forces throughout the Southern states. There are now even Negro deputy sheriffs in such black-belt areas as Dallas County, Alabama. Just three years ago, a Negro could be beaten for going into the county courthouse in Dallas County; now Negroes share in running it. So there are some changes. But the changes are basically

in the social and political areas; the problems we now face—providing jobs, better housing and better education for the poor throughout the country—will require money for their solution, a fact that makes those solutions all the more difficult.

The need for solutions, meanwhile, becomes more urgent every day, because these problems are far more serious now than they were just a few years ago. Before 1964, things were getting better economically for the Negro; but after that year, things began to take a turn for the worse. In particular, automation began to cut into our jobs very badly, and this snuffed out the few sparks of hope the black people had begun to nurture. As long as there was some measurable and steady economic progress, Negroes were willing and able to press harder and work harder and hope for something better. But when the door began to close on the few avenues of progress, then hopeless despair began to set in.

The fact that most white people do not comprehend this situation which prevails in the North as well as in the South—is due largely to the press, which molds the opinions of the white community. Many whites hasten to congratulate themselves on what little progress we Negroes have made. I'm sure that most whites felt that with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, all race problems were automatically solved. Because most white people are so far removed from the life of the average Negro, there has been little to challenge this assumption. Yet Negroes continue to live with racism every day. It doesn't matter where we are individually in the scheme of things, how near we may be either to the top or to the bottom of society, the cold facts of racism slap each one of us in the face. A friend of mine is a lawyer, one of the most brilliant young men I know. Were he a white lawyer, I have no doubt that he would be in a \$100,000 job with a major corporation or heading his own independent firm. As it is, he makes a mere \$20,000 a year. This may seem like a lot of money and, to most of us, it is, but the point is that this young man's background and abilities would, if his skin color were different, entitle him to an income many times that amount.

I don't think there is a single major insurance company that hires Negro lawyers. Even within the agencies of the federal government, most Negro employees are in the lower echelons, only a handful of Negroes in federal employment are in upper-income brackets. This is a situation that cuts across this country's economic spectrum. The Chicago Urban League recently conducted a research project in the Kenwood community on the South Side. They discovered that the average educational grade level of Negroes in that community was 10.6 years and the median income was about \$4,200 a year. In nearby Gage Park, the median educational grade level of the whites was 8.6 years, but the median income was \$9,600 per year. In fact, the average white high school dropout makes as much as, if not more than, the average Negro college graduate.

Solutions for these problems, urgent as they are, must be constructive and rational. Rioting and violence provide no solutions for economic problems. Much of the justification for rioting has come from the thesis—originally set forth by Franz Fanon—that violence has a certain cleansing effect. Perhaps, in a special psychological sense, he may have had a point. But we have seen a better and more constructive cleansing process in our nonviolent demonstrations. Another theory to justify violent revolution is that rioting enables Negroes to overcome their fear of the white man. But they are just as afraid of the power structure after a riot as before. I remember that was true when our staff went into Rochester, New York, after the riot of 1964. When we discussed the possibility of going down to talk with the police, the people who had been most aggressive in the violence were afraid to talk. They still had a sense of inferiority, and not until they were bolstered by the presence of our staff and given reassurance of their political power and the rightness of their cause and the justness of their grievances were they able



and willing to sit down and talk to the police chief and the city manager about the conditions that had produced the riot.

As a matter of fact, I think the aura of paramilitarism among the black militant groups speaks much more of fear than it does of confidence. I know, in my own experience, that I was much more afraid in Montgomery when I had a gun in my house. When I decided that, as a teacher of the philosophy of non-violence, I couldn't keep a gun, I came face to face with the question of death and I dealt with it. And from that point on, I no longer needed a gun nor have I been afraid. Ultimately, one's sense of manhood must come from within him.

The riots in Negro ghettos have been, in one sense, merely another expression of the growing climate of violence in America. When a culture begins to feel threatened by its own inadequacies, the majority of men tend to prop themselves up by artificial means, rather than dig down deep into their spiritual and cultural wellsprings. America seems to have reached this point. Americans as a whole feel threatened by communism on one hand and, on the other, by the rising tide of aspirations among the undeveloped nations. I think most Americans know in their hearts that their country has been terribly wrong in its dealings with other peoples around the world. When Rome began to disintegrate from within, it turned to a strengthening of the military establishment, rather than to a correction of the corruption within the society. We are doing the same thing in this country and the result will probably be the same—unless, and here I admit to a bit of chauvinism, the black man in America can provide a new soul force for all Americans, a new expression of the American dream that need not be realized at the expense of other men around the world, but a dream of opportunity and life that can be shared with the rest of the world.

It seems glaringly obvious to me that the development of a humanitarian means of dealing with some of the social problems of the world—and the correlative revolution in American values that this will entail—is a much better way of protecting ourselves against the threat of violence than the military means we have chosen. On these grounds, I must indict the Johnson administration. It has seemed amazingly devoid of statesmanship, and when creative statesmanship wanes, irrational militarism increases. In this sense, President Kennedy was far more of a statesman than President Johnson. He was a man who was big enough to admit when he was wrong—as he did after the Bay of Pigs incident. But Lyndon Johnson seems to be unable to make this kind of statesmanlike gesture in connection with Vietnam. And I think that this has led, as Senator

Fulbright has said, to such a strengthening of the military-industrial complex of this country that the president now finds himself almost totally trapped by it. Even at this point, when he can readily summon popular support to end the bombing in Vietnam, he persists. Yet bombs in Vietnam also explode at home; they destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America.

In our efforts to dispel this atmosphere of violence in this country, we cannot afford to overlook the root cause of the riots. The President's Riot Commission concluded that most violence-prone Negroes are teenagers or young adults who, almost invariably, are underemployed ("underemployed" means working every day but earning an income below the poverty level) or who are employed in menial jobs. And according to a recent Department of Labor statistical report, 24.8 percent of Negro youth are currently unemployed, a statistic that does not include the drifters who avoid the census takers. Actually, it's my guess that the statistics are very, very conservative in this area. The Bureau of the Census has admitted a 10 percent error in this age group, and the unemployment statistics are based on those who are actually applying for jobs. But it isn't just a lack of work, it's also a lack of meaningful work. In Cleveland, 58 percent of the young men between the ages of 16 and 25 were estimated to be either unemployed or underemployed. This appalling situation is probably 90 percent of the root cause of the Negro riots. A Negro who has finished high school often watches his white classmates go out into the job market and earn \$100 a week, while he, because he is black, is expected to work for \$40 a week. Hence, there is a tremendous hostility and resentment that only a difference in race keeps him out of an adequate job. This situation is social dynamite. When you add the lack of recreational facilities and adequate job counseling, and the continuation of an aggressively hostile police environment, you have a truly explosive situation. Any night on any street corner in any Negro ghetto of the country, a nervous policeman can start a riot simply by being impolite or by expressing racial prejudice. And white people are sadly unaware how routinely and frequently this occurs.

It hardly needs to be said that solutions to these critical problems are overwhelmingly urgent. The President's Riot Commission recommended that funds for summer programs aimed at young Negroes should be increased. New York is already spending more on its special summer programs than on its year-round poverty efforts, but these are only tentative and emergency steps toward a truly meaningful and permanent solution. And the negative thinking in this area voiced by many whites does not help the situation. Unfortunately, many white people think that we merely "reward" a rioter by taking positive action to better his situation. What these white people do not realize is that the Negroes who riot have given up on America. When nothing is done to alleviate their plight, this merely confirms the Negroes' conviction that America is a hopelessly decadent society. When something positive is done, however, when constructive action follows a riot, a rioter's despair is allayed and he is forced to re-evaluate America and to consider whether some good might eventually come from our society after all. But, I repeat, the recent curative steps that have been taken are, at best, inadequate. The summer poverty programs, like most other government projects, function well in some places and are totally ineffective in others. The difference, in large measure, is one of citizen participation, that is the key to success or failure. In cases such as the Farmers' Marketing Cooperative Association in the black belt of Alabama and the Child Development Group in Mississippi, where the people were really involved in the planning and action of the program, it was one of the best experiences in self-help and grass-roots initiative. But in places like Chicago, where poverty programs are used strictly as a tool of the political machinery and for dispensing party patronage, the very concept of helping

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America has not yet changed because so many think it need not change, but this is the illusion of the damned.”

the poor is defiled and the poverty program becomes just another form of enslavement. I still wouldn't want to do away with it, though, even in Chicago. We must simply fight at both the local and the national levels to gain as much community control as possible over the poverty program.

But there is no single answer to the plight of the American Negro. Conditions and needs vary greatly in different sections of the country. I think that the place to start, however, is in the area of human relations, and especially in the area of community-police relations. This is a sensitive and touchy problem that has rarely been adequately emphasized. Virtually every riot has begun from some police action. If you try to tell the people in most Negro communities that the police are their friends, they just laugh at you. Obviously, something desperately needs to be done to correct this. I have been particularly impressed by the fact that even in the state of Mississippi, where the FBI did a significant training job with the Mississippi police, the police are much more courteous to Negroes than they are in Chicago or New York. Our police forces simply must develop an attitude of courtesy and respect for the ordinary citizen. If we can just stop policemen from using profanity in their encounters with black people, we will have accomplished a lot. In the larger sense, police must cease being occupation troops in the ghetto and start protecting its residents. Yet very few cities have really faced up to this problem and tried to do something about it. It is the most abrasive element in Negro-white relations, but it is the last to be scientifically and objectively appraised.

When you go beyond a relatively simple though serious problem such as police racism, however, you begin to get into all the complexities of the modern American economy. Urban transit systems in most American cities, for example, have become a genuine civil rights issue—and a valid one—because the layout of rapid-transit systems determines the accessibility of jobs to the black community. If transportation systems in American cities could be laid out so as to provide an opportunity for poor people to get meaningful employment, then they could begin to move into the mainstream of American life. A good example of this problem is my home city of Atlanta, where the rapid-transit system has been laid out for the convenience of the white upper-middle-class suburbanites who commute to their jobs downtown. The system has virtually no consideration for connecting the poor people with their jobs. There is only one possible explanation for this situation, and that is the racist blindness of city planners.

The same problems are to be found in the areas of rent supplement and low-income housing. The relevance of these issues to human relations and human rights cannot be overemphasized. The kind of house a man lives in, along with the quality of his employment, determines, to a large degree, the quality of his family life. I have known too many people in my own parish in Atlanta who, because they were living in overcrowded apartments, were constantly bickering with other members of their families—a situation that produced many kinds of severe dysfunctions in family rela-

tions. And yet I have seen these same families achieve harmony when they were able to afford a house allowing for a little personal privacy and freedom of movement.

All these human-relations problems are complex and related, and it's very difficult to assign priorities—especially as long as the Vietnam War continues. The Great Society has become a victim of the war. I think there was a sincere desire in this country four or five years ago to move toward a genuinely great society, and I have little doubt that there would have been a gradual increase in federal expenditures in this direction, rather than the gradual decline that has occurred, if the war in Vietnam had been avoided.

One of the incongruities of this situation is the fact that such a large number of the soldiers in the Armed Forces in Vietnam—especially the front-line soldiers who are actually doing the fighting—are Negroes. Negroes have always held the hope that if they really demonstrate that they are great soldiers and if they really fight for America and help save American democracy, then when they come back home, America will treat them better. This has not been the case. Negro soldiers returning from World War One were met with race riots, job discrimination and continuation of the bigotry that they had experienced before. After World War Two, the GI Bill did offer some hope for a better life to those who had the educational background to take advantage of it, and there was proportionately less turmoil. But for the Negro GI, military service still represents a means of escape from the oppressive ghettos of the rural South and the urban North. He often sees the Army as an avenue for educational opportunities and job training. He sees in the military uniform a symbol of dignity that has long been denied him by society. The tragedy in this is that military service is probably the only possible escape for most young Negro men. Many of them go into the Army, risking death, in order that they might have a few of

the human possibilities of life. They know that life in the city ghetto or life in the rural South almost certainly means jail or death or humiliation. And so, by comparison, military service is really the lesser risk.

One young man on our staff, Hosea Williams, returned from the foxholes of Germany a 60-percent-disabled veteran. After 13 months in a veterans' hospital, he went back to his home town of Attapulgus, Georgia. On his way home, he went into a bus station at Americus, Georgia, to get a drink of water while waiting for his next bus. And while he stood there on his crutches, drinking from the fountain, he was beaten savagely by white hoodlums. This pathetic incident is all too typical of the treatment received by Negroes in this country—not only physical brutality but brutal discrimination when a Negro tries to buy a house, and brutal violence against the Negro's soul when he finds himself denied a job that he knows he is qualified for.

There is also the violence of having to live in a community and pay higher consumer prices for goods or higher rent for equivalent housing than are charged in the white areas of the city. Do you know that a can of beans almost always costs a few cents more in grocery chain stores located in the Negro ghetto than in a store of that same chain located in the upper-middle-class suburbs, where the median income is five times as high? The Negro knows it, because he works in the white man's house as a cook or a gardener. And what do you think this knowledge does to his soul? How do you think it affects his view of the society he lives in? How can you expect anything but disillusionment and bitterness? The question that now faces us is whether we can turn the Negro's disillusionment and bitterness into hope and faith in the essential goodness of the American system. If we don't, our society will crumble.

It is a paradox that those Negroes who have given up on America are doing more to improve it than are its professional patriots. They are stirring the mass of smug, somnolent citizens, who are neither evil nor good, to an awareness of crisis.

The confrontation involves not only their morality but their self-interest, and that combination promises to evoke positive action. This is not a nation of venal people. It is a land of individuals who, in the majority, have not cared, who have been heartless about their black neighbors because their ears are blocked and their eyes blinded by the tragic myth that Negroes endure abuse without pain or complaint. Even when protest flared and denied the myth, they were fed new doctrines of inhumanity that argued that Negroes were arrogant, lawless and ungrateful. Habitual white discrimination was transformed into white backlash. But for some, the lies had lost their grip and an internal disquiet grew. Poverty and discrimination were undeniably real, they scarred the nation, they dirtied our honor and diminished our pride. An insistent question defied evasion: Was security for some being purchased at the price of degradation for others? Everything in our traditions said this kind of injustice was the system of the past or of other nations. And yet there it was, abroad in our own land.

Thus was born—particularly in the young generation—a spirit of dissent that ranged from superficial disavowal of the old values to total commitment to wholesale, drastic and immediate social reform. Yet all of it was dissent. Their voice is still a minority; but united with millions of black protesting voices, it has become a sound of distant thunder increasing in volume with the gathering of storm clouds. This dissent is America's hope. It shines in the long tradition of American ideals that began with courageous minutemen in New England, that continued in the Abolitionist movement, that re-emerged in the Populist revolt and, decades later, that burst forth to elect Franklin Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy. Today's dissenters tell the complacent majority that the time has come when further evasion of social responsibility in a turbulent world will court disaster and death. America has not yet changed because so many think it need not change, but this is the illusion of the damned. America must change because 23 million black citizens will no longer live supinely in a wretched past. They have left the valley of despair; they have found strength in struggle, and whether they live or die, they shall never crawl nor retreat again. Joined by white allies, they will shake the prison walls until they fall. America must change.

A voice out of Bethlehem 2,000 years ago said that all men are equal. It said right would triumph. Jesus of Nazareth wrote no books, he owned no property to endow him with influence. He had no friends in the courts of the powerful. But he changed the course of mankind with only the poor and the despised. Naïve and unsophisticated though we may be, the poor and despised of the 20th century will revolutionize this era. In our "arrogance, lawlessness and ingratitude," we will fight for human justice, brotherhood, secure peace and abundance for all. When we have won these—in a spirit of unshakable nonviolence—then, in luminous splendor, the Christian era will truly begin.





**Strength and
purpose**

Katie Flowers

Model @KatieFlowers







Such an absolute honour to have you featured in Playboy! How has your journey in the industry shaped your personal growth? Thank you, darling, and what a delicious honour it is. My journey has been a bit like stilettos on cobblestones: sometimes graceful, sometimes clumsy, always committed to the look. This industry taught me how to love out loud, leave when it's time, and glow up from every heart-break. I've learned that softness isn't weakness. It's a strategy

What are some of your biggest dreams you hope to achieve? I want to write a book that women keep in their nightstand and their bedside drawer, equal parts wisdom and wildness. And I'd love to launch a lingerie line that feels like a love letter to the female body. Dream big. Wear lace

If you could talk to your younger self, what would you say to her? I'd whisper, "Stop apologizing for your sparkle. One day they'll call it a brand."

What's one thing you've learned from your journey as an influencer that you wish you knew when you started? That real influence isn't about going viral, it's about going visceral. The impact you make when you show up honest, even when you're not perfectly contoured.

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you? I'm wildly monogamous with my morning tea, my order, and slightly terrified of goats. Long story.

What are the top 3 best moments of your career?

1. The first time a woman messaged me saying, "You made me leave him in the best way"
2. Shooting a campaign where the team said, "Just be you."
3. Saying no to a contract that didn't respect my value and walking away in heels.

What is your favourite chill time activity? Bubble baths with a face mask and a vintage podcast. Preferably while texting back in lowercase only.

We are taking you out on your ultimate date, and we really want to knock this one out of the ballpark. What would that entail? Take me to an art exhibit, let's flirt in front of a Klimt,

then slow dance in a candlelit kitchen while we overcook pasta. Bonus points if dessert is spontaneous and not store-bought.

What are, hands down, your absolute favourite things to do? Making women laugh at things they were once ashamed of. Wearing silk robes for no reason. Rewriting the ending to my own story again and again.

Who or what motivates you to keep pushing forward? The woman I haven't met yet, the one scrolling, wondering if she's too much. I push for her. I push for us

You have one last chance to do something you've always wanted to do, with no limits on anything. What are you doing? Renting a villa in Positano, inviting all my favourite women, and throwing a "Thank You, Next" party for every version of us we had to outgrow

What's a lesson you've learned that changed the way you approach life? That closure isn't something you get. It's something you decide

If you weren't in the entertainment world, what career would you love to explore? Something equally glamorous and slightly chaotic, like being a love columnist or running a retreat in the South of France. With rosé. And rules.

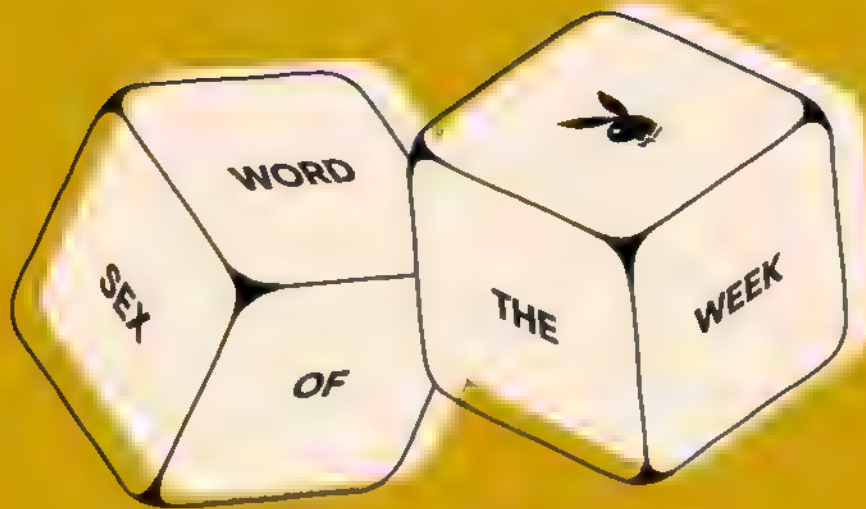
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Edging

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
KATIE BAILIE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

edging (v) the act of delaying an orgasm for as long as possible for the ultimate benefit of a more intense climax

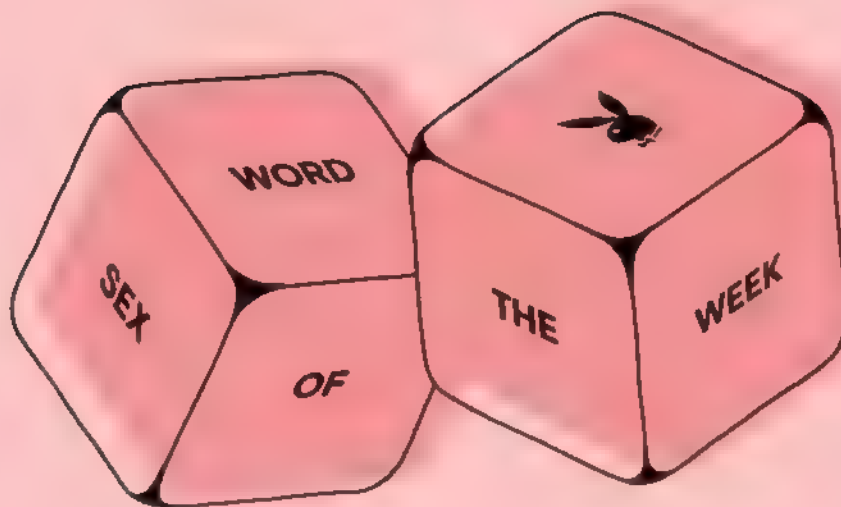
Jeremy edged himself to the brink, pulling himself back each time. When he finally let go, the release was more powerful than anything he had felt before.

Everyone knows what mind control is. So imagine that, but for your junk. Edging takes a remarkable amount of concentration and discipline, but the payoff can literally knock you off your feet. To edge is to deliberately delay sexual gratification to create a more intense climax later on. So essentially masturbating or having sex to the tipping point of orgasm, and then taking your foot off the gas. To the unenlightened person this may sound incredibly frustrating, but to the sexual connoisseur it's the gift that keeps on giving.

To become a master of edging, starting out with a start-stop technique is pretty straightforward. Pleasure yourself until you get excited and then hit pause for a few seconds or a few minutes. Once you're back to a relaxed state, do it again and keep doing it. Each time you start and stop, you're increasing the tension level in your pelvic floor—tension that will be released in a powerful way once you allow yourself to go over the orgasm cliff.

Not only is edging great for increasing pleasure for all genders, it can help men who struggle with premature ejaculation. By diligently practicing edging on your own and then with a partner, you'll have better control of those muscles and be able to delay orgasm for longer.

Delayed gratification could be the key to leveling up your intimate life. So go slowly and smell the roses.



Pompoir

WRITTEN BY
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If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

pompoir (*n*) contracting and releasing the vaginal muscles in order to stimulate the penis during penetrative sex

Gemma mounted her partner and performed pompoir on his erect penis until they both climaxed

This week's word is great for your orgasm if you're a vagina-haver, but it can also strengthen your pelvic walls, leading to better bladder health! It's called pompoir, and some basically consider it a fancy word for doing Kegels on a dick.

During traditional penetrative sex, two partners will move rhythmically in tandem with each other, thrusting or rocking. In pompoir, however, both parties are completely stationary and the only part in motion is the vagina-haver's vaginal canal. The pelvic floor muscles—specifically the pubococcygeus muscles—do all the heavy lifting. They squeeze and release, and—if the practitioner is highly skilled—they also tug at the penis, push it down or even gently twist on the shaft. To a casual outside observer, it will look like a woman is just calmly sitting cowgirl-style on her partner's penis, until, of course, the tension builds to the point where one (or, ideally, both) of them orgasms. It takes a lot of patience, concentration and restraint, but the payoff can be a mind-blowing climax.

Doing pompoir exercises on your own, outside the context of sex, can also do wonders for your pelvic floor health. Over time, the pelvic floor can weaken due to childbirth, menopause or other age-related factors. Practicing pompoir can help regain power in those muscles, leading to health benefits like a stronger bladder. Whatever your reason for wanting to become a pompoir master, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that each practice session gets you closer to being in complete control of your (and your partner's) orgasm.

THE DOPE TUTOR ANSWERS:



**WHAT DOES
WEED LAW
HAVE TO DO
WITH RACISM?**

BY **ANDREW DEANGELO**

ILLUSTRATION BY **RICHARD A. CHANCE**



The history of cannabis law in America is one of injustice, with people of color bearing the brunt of a system weighted against them

As with many things in America, the cannabis experience for white people has been different from the cannabis experience for people of color. White citizens have used and traded cannabis at nearly the same rates as Black and Brown people, but Black and Brown people have been arrested nearly four times as often. In most cases, people of color have done jail time while people like me were able to grow wealth in the cannabis industry—both underground and, more recently, legally. There is no doubt that the color of my skin has given me untold advantages others do not enjoy.

The racist history of federal cannabis prohibition in the United States is the subject of Fab 5 Freddy's Netflix documentary masterpiece *Grass Is Greener*. With his cast of musical icons, the filmmaker exposes the story of how mid-level bureaucrat Harry J. Anslinger ascended to be the nation's first drug czar on the backs of Black jazz musicians and Brown citizens, a tale both shocking and unsurprising for 1930s America. F

or 30 years Anslinger promoted racist propaganda and policy that resulted in much higher rates of drug-related arrests and imprisonment for people of color. Then in 1970 President Richard Nixon, another racist in a position of great power, launched the Controlled Substances Act, famously classifying cannabis as a Schedule I drug so he could go after his two biggest enemies, Blacks and hippies, and the DEA was born. Old Anslinger even came out of retirement for the ceremony.

"It was never about the cannabis," Freddy tells me, "but about the people who were using it, plain and simple."

Cannabis prohibition was really just a war on people of color, another way to rob them of opportunity and justice.

Ronald Reagan rode a wave of conservative promises to the White House in 1980. With the launch of the "Just Say No" campaign promoted by First Lady Nancy Reagan, mandatory minimums and racial sentencing disparities proliferated. Widespread workplace urinalysis testing arose in the 1980s, further putting pressure on communities of color as jobs were lost, income obliterated and children removed from families due to a failed drug test or a weed possession charge. As funding for the drug war skyrocketed, even public

schools began to embed police and practice urinalysis screening. The so-called school-to-prison pipeline that haunts some Black and Brown communities to this day is due in large part to the unjust cannabis policies and overpolicing that targeted those communities.

So how do we right these wrongs now?

"The fight is trying to clean the American house of this evil infection called racism that is the root cause of everything from drug wars to a lack of ownership in the legal cannabis industry, or any other industry," says Freddy.

Today Black Americans own just 4 percent of the legal cannabis industry, while whites own 81 percent. Those in the cannabis business have a moral obligation to commit to social equity (not least because that aligns with the values the plant teaches us). Given the gross injustices of the past, Black and Brown people must be empowered in the legal cannabis industry to have ownership, equity and wealth created for and by themselves. This is the true promise of cannabis law reform.

Kassandra Frederique, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance, put it simply in *Grass Is Greener*: "The solution has to be more comprehensive than the damage that has been done."

Most importantly, social equity represents a sacred promise that our industry must keep to right the wrongs of the past and begin to heal the inequities that permeate our society. That promise cannot be kept until more people of color attain positions of power and ownership in the legal cannabis industry.

Cannabis prohibition was really just a war on people of color, another way to rob them of opportunity and justice.

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